

Feel it in Your Body

Hybridization of Musical Habitus in Swedish Cultural-Educational Tourism to
Ghana

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Abstract

On the surface the practice of African musics and dances in Sweden seems to be evidence of otherization and exoticization of African cultures. However, those Swedes of non-African background who do African musics and dances are genuinely engaged with the practice in the sense that they participate wholeheartedly and seem to both value and feel positive outcomes from their participation. This thesis explores how the body meets new 'other' musics and acquires new musicking practices, and how this is influenced by the body's musical habitus as well as its own individual life experiences and emotional context. Additionally I look at the body's role as an integral part of music, rather than as external to it. To illustrate this I use a case study of a group of Swedes on a cultural-educational tourism trip to Ghana and my own first-hand experience with them learning choreographed dance based on traditional movements and rhythms, and Ewe polyrhythmic drumming. I show how discourses of difference resulting from historical contact, and previous individual experiences influence the encounter with new music, and how the body through social interactions perceives and acquires new musical practices, integrating them with known musical practices to form a kind of hybrid or new musical practice.

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Glossary

This glossary is intended as an introduction to some terms used in this thesis. It is by no means exclusive, and a significant amount of detailed information has been excluded for the sake of simplicity and efficiency.

Agbadza – An Ewe style for ceremonies and gatherings. This style has a 12/8 rhythm for which the dancers often use 4-beat division. In some ceremonies those who aren't dancing for the moment use two sticks to hit out the beat, often a 4-beat or a 3+2 beat pattern.

Agbekor – An Ewe style historically described as a war dance depicting scenes from a battle. The gangkogui plays the same rhythm as in Agbadza, but the dance is more structured. The lead drum signals specific variations in the dance with specific rhythms, to which the dancers respond. The dancers often wear red and black and use horsetails during the dance. In this style the dancers' basic movement alternates between a 3+2 division of 12/8 and a 4 division of 12/8.

Atoke – A canoe shaped iron bell. The player cradles the atoke in his or her hand and strikes it with a small iron rod.

Atsimevu – A long, narrow drum with an open bottom that is used to play lead drum. Due to the size of the drum, the drum must rest on a stand that angles it away from the floor and allows for the sound to resonate. The player stands while playing and uses wooden drum sticks and hands to produce sound. As a lead drum the drum signals to other drums, dancers, singers, etc. indicating the style to be played, the tempo, but often it signals if there should be a change in dance movement or supporting drum patterns.

Axatse – A rattle made from a dried gourd around which a net of seeds, shells or beads have been laced to produce a rattle sound. The player holds the handle of the axatse with the left hand and strikes it on the right thigh and the downward-facing palm or the bottom of the fist of the right hand. The axatse often plays a complementary rhythm to the Gangkogui, striking additional off-beats.

Azonto – A popular music and dance style in Ghana that often is characterized by a bass or percussion part emphasizing beats 1, 2 and 3, with silence on or de-emphasis of beat 4, and by synthesized instruments playing off-beats. A syncopated rhythm with a lead up to beat one is also common. The lyrics are often performed in spoken word or rap-style. See for example, Spotify playlist, "Ghana/Azonto Mix" by user 1231310785.¹

Ewe – An ethnolinguistic group whose traditional lands lie along the Eastern side of the Volta river in Ghana and cross into Togo.

¹ "[Ghana/Azonto Mix](https://open.spotify.com/user/1231310785/playlist/7xl3tNrzpnmWu3fPTx1wP8)," created June 16, 2012, last modified June 23, 2014, <http://open.spotify.com/user/1231310785/playlist/7xl3tNrzpnmWu3fPTx1wP8>. Accessed September 9, 2014.

Fanti – An ethnolinguistic group whose traditional lands lie along Ghana’s coast, from the Par river to the Western side of Accra.

Ga – An ethnolinguistic group whose traditional lands lie along Ghana’s coast, in the Accra area and East.

Gahu – A recreational Ewe style whose origins are said to be a “satirical commentary on modernization in Africa.”² The dance is structured with dancers moving in a circle. The lead drum signals specific variations in the dance with specific rhythms, to which the dancers respond.

Gangkogui – a double-bell made of iron. The two bells have different pitches. The smaller of the two is positioned above the larger one and has higher pitch. A wooden drum stick is used to hit the bell to produce sound. The gangkogui plays a repetitive, unchanging pattern using both the low and high bells. The low bell is often struck on beat 1 and the high bell is struck for the remainder of the rhythm. Sometimes the hit on the low bell is played on the high bell.

Kagan, or **Kaganu** – A high-pitched narrow drum with an open bottom. The player angles the drum away from the player to enable the sound to resonate. Thin long drum sticks are used to hit the skin. The kagan often plays a rhythm that emphasizes the off-beat, and doesn’t sound on the beat.

Kidi – A mid-range-pitched drum with a solid bottom. The player produces sound using sticks and his or her hands. The hands are used in a variety of ways, including to dampen the sound by pressing or touching the skin during a stick hit or as a hit on its own. Hand-hits can strike different areas of the skin to achieve different pitch and tone qualities. Different kinds of hits, such as a slap-hit or a bounce-hit also alter the pitch and tone quality of the sound produced.

Reggae – A Jamaican music style with a regular bass and drum rhythm that is offset by guitar and keyboard riffs that often on beats 2 and 4.

Sogo – A mid-range-pitched drum with a solid bottom. The Sogo’s pitch is lower than the Kidi’s. The player produces sound using sticks and his or her hands, as with the Kidi. The Sogo can play lead drum parts in some styles.

Sikchy – A traditional Fanti style.

² David Locke, *Drum Gahu: An Introduction to African Rhythm*, (Tempe, Arizona: White Cliffs Media, 1998), 5.

Introduction

My first exposure to 'African Music' likely came when I was a very young child and my parents were involved in various inter-denominational Christian organizations, as well as through the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's (CBC) now defunct radio program, the Global Village, a music program that played music from around the world. I wasn't particularly interested in it until I had the opportunity to join the West African Music Ensemble as an undergraduate student at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. I was a member of the ensemble for the duration of my time in Edmonton, as a student and a former-student member. I became highly involved and invested in the group on two levels: musically, and experientially. Musically I was fascinated and challenged by the polyrhythms of the Ewe music we played and the sense of time, and experientially I found that the music had an effect on me as a whole. My well-being physically and emotionally was affected positively by my doing Ewe music, though in a way that is difficult to translate into language. That is, something was happening on a phenomenal level while I was musicking.

Fast-forward to five years later, and I am a new citizen of Sweden and a master student in musicology. I decided to investigate the possibility of researching African or West African music in Sweden. What I discovered was a lot of Swedes taking African drumming and dancing classes at gyms, adult educational organizations such as Sensus, schools for the arts (*Kulturskolor*), privately owned dance and drum schools such as Urkult or Rythm Works, and with private citizens. I also met a group of Swedes who had formed a group to perform West African music and dancing (Baadjoo), and who had travelled both to Ghana and Germany to learn from their Ghanaian mentor, Emanuel Gomado, who also travelled to Sweden to teach them.

In some cases (though by no means all) it seemed that the participants were confirming a belief in exotic ideas about Africa, in particular by dressing in clothing that emphasized difference from Swedish norms in pattern and style. But there was a genuine enjoyment of and engagement with the act of musicking through dancing, drumming, or singing that was common to everyone. It felt like there was a lot of otherization and differentiation occurring, but there was more to it, and the exterior was really an expression of an internal phenomenal experience.

Objectives

My encounter with Ewe music and Swedes doing African musics inspired me to ponder what was actually happening when I started doing Ewe music, and when the Swedes I met did various African genres of dancing, drumming, and singing. The purpose of this thesis is thus the meeting

between the known and the unknown, both phenomenally and musically. I aim to get a better understanding of what happens phenomenally when the body meets the new or unknown, and in particular what happens as it does and learns new music, and to clarify the processes involved in the hybridization of musical habitus. I have chosen to do a case study as a way of organizing my research and as an example of what I believe to be similar processes involved in crossing borders – in musical genre, geography, ethnicity, language, and so on.

This case study follows a cultural-educational tourism trip to Ghana led by a Swede and with Swedish participants, for whom West African music, and particularly Ewe music, was not a part of their own musical cultural traditions. Many of them had in some way come into contact with different kinds of African musics through dance or drum classes. The aim of this study is not to determine what is Swedish or not, nor to draw lines between the Swedish and the non-Swedish. The lines about what or who is Swedish are becoming increasingly blurred and are not easily defined into one or another category, to which my own citizenship can attest. There is still, however, a majority population who identifies with historical Swedish traditions and practices. All the participants on this trip are a part of this majority, and this aspect of the study is interesting on a variety of levels.

On one level, a Swede is doing music that is not traditionally considered Swedish, nor is it a part of their cultural background. This gives rise to questions of contact and connection: How did this Swede come into contact with the music? What kinds of connections between people and places led to the possibility of a Swede hearing and doing the music? What influences the contact and the reaction or response to it? To answer this I have chosen in my third chapter to look into historical connections between Sweden and Africa to illustrate how attitudes and beliefs about Africa and all things African are learned and have evolved over time, and as a result of interactions and interconnections between people. This background context is also important for understanding how Swedes today may approach, perceive, understand, and talk about their contact with African cultural practices. In the fourth chapter I have also documented and described connections and contacts with people and places that have given rise to the opportunity to learn and do Ewe music in Sweden and Ghana.

On another level a body is learning to do and be in a new music, and acquiring new cultural knowledge. How does the body negotiate this meeting with new music? What does the body have to do to learn and acquire the music, to be able to get into the music? Within the context of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, and through participant-observations, I try to document and explain in chapter four how the body perceives music and itself in relation to

music, particularly with the purpose of investigating the body's treatment of itself. Is it a subject? Or an object? Or both at the same time?

Part of this process also involves the encounter with the music 'itself,' its characteristics and a new way of understanding and approaching it. In chapter four I also seek to answer through musical examples how the body as an observer-participant or dancer fits in with musical sounds provided by instruments. For example, does the body provide what John Miller Chernoff describes as the "unsounded beat" that is so characteristic of Ewe polyrhythmic music?³ And if so, how? However, I don't intend to make any particular generalizations about the music, nor its social context, nor do I intend to focus on a comparative investigation of West African and Western musical styles. Rather the purpose of this part of the study is to understand the body's experience of Ewe music on a phenomenal level and how the way the body feels the music is crucial to how it fits into the polyrhythmic structure.

Phenomenology in Music

Phenomenology is fundamentally about understanding the building blocks of human experience, and as a field it has many variations. This paper draws upon an embodied phenomenology which developed from a focus on experience as comprised of what Edmund Husserl called 'essences,' intangible concepts of objects (in this case utterly separated from context) on which consciousness is founded. We interpret and we ascribe meaning to these essences as a way of understanding the world we experience.⁴ From there the focus on the intangible concepts in phenomenology moves to the tangible physicality of being and experiencing the world through Martin Heidegger's existential phenomenology and concept *Dasein* (being-in-the-world),⁵ and Alfred Schutz's focus on actual lived experience in the world.⁶ Maurice Merleau-Ponty's work further shifted phenomenology towards a more embodied experience and perception of the world which connected the consciousness to the physical, the body acting.⁷

This is the starting point for my own work, and I aim to expand upon the connection between conscious perception and embodiment to see embodied experience as fundamentally interconnected with what seems to be the external, the objects out in the world. That is, the body and its experience of the world in the world are not separate from the world, but an

³ John Miller Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 50.

⁴ Brian Fay, "Phenomenology and Social Inquiry: From Consciousness to Culture and Critique," in *The Blackwell Guide to the Philosophy of Social Sciences*, edited by Stephen P. Turner and Paul A. Roth, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003), p43 of 382, Kindle Edition.

⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978).

⁶ Alfred Schutz, *The Structures of the Life World* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, (New York: Routledge, 2012).

integrated part of the world, and that which the body perceives as external objects is not necessarily as separate from the body as it seems to be. The body's internal processing of its perceptions, that is the senses' interpretation of the essences of experience, are integrated and interconnected with the body's response to these perceptions, much like Ruth Stone⁸, Alfred Schutz⁹ and others have described the interaction between a musicking body's sense of 'inner time' and the 'outer time' that it produces. Building upon these authors and the more contemporary work of Matthew Rahaim on gesture and vocalization in Hindustani music¹⁰, I hope to show how bodies in the world are part of a much larger, interconnected world of thought objects both produced and experienced by the bodies themselves.

Interconnectedness, Sameness, Difference

Anthropological and ethnomusicological research was up until the mid-twentieth century focused on researching other cultures, that is, cultures and practices that were not part of the mainstream majority white, European/American norms. The concept of 'the other' is by no means new, as Edward Said discusses in his article, "Orientalism," where he describes how the study of 'the Orient' was formally established in European places of higher study in 1312.¹¹ The remarkable thing about this event is that it established a field of study of 'the other' based on "a geographical, cultural, linguistic and ethnic unit." This was a purposeful delineation and construction based on divisiveness and difference, and its influence lingers today in discourse about that which is not European/American, white-dominated, Christian-based, and arguably, male. In ethnomusicology it has manifested itself, as Bruno Nettl describes, as a practice of looking at "the world of music as a series of discrete musics," a description which implies not only distinction but also categorization.¹²

Mantle Hood's book *The Ethnomusicologist* emphasizes musicking as a means of gaining knowledge about music as opposed to studying music through language about music¹³. Charles Seeger takes this further and suggests that "learning...through performance commands parity

⁸ Ruth Stone, "Time and Rhythm in Music," *Music Theory Spectrum*, 7 (1985): 139-148, Accessed April 29, 2014. doi: 10.2307/745884

⁹ as referenced in Ruth Stone, "Time and Rhythm in Music," 146.

¹⁰ Matthew Rahaim, *Musicking Bodies: Gesture and Voice in Hindustani Music*, (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2012), Kindle Edition.

¹¹ Edward Said, "Orientalism," *The Georgia Review*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (1977): 162, Accessed September 3, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41397448>.

¹² Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-One Issues and Concepts*, (University of Illinois Press: Chicago, 2005), 50.

¹³ Mantle Hood, *The Ethnomusicologist*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971).

with, if not superiority to, the logocentric processes of chair study.”¹⁴ In other words, the doing of something as a means of learning about it, he says, provides the researcher with a different kind of knowledge, and he suggests that that practical knowledge is more valuable than knowledge gained by other means, specifically those involving language – speech and written word.

However, Language plays a large role in our understanding and knowledge of the unfamiliar, and Paula Ebron shows in her book, *Performing Africa*, that discourse is often repeated to the point that it becomes a framework. It then becomes difficult to discuss a particular topic outside of that framework. Ebron shows how a discourse of framework about Africa has otherized and simplified the multiplicity and complexity of musics in Africa under the generalizing term, ‘African Music.’¹⁵

Any study of music of a culture, time or place other than those with which one is familiar requires some form of translation, be it linguistic, as in the translation of language and the words used in the discourse around the music, or semiotic in another sense, as in the translation of an oral tradition to a notated one. As Lawrence Kramer states, “the cultural study of music is necessarily the study of language about music.”¹⁶ Kramer posits that music is heard through a cultural filter, that it is both heard and talked about through this filter, and that culture can be communicated in this way. That is, we can ‘read’ culture by listening to what people say and watching what they do, and in this case, also what and how they play.

For this study I have chosen, in line with Hood and Seeger, to both practice as a means of gaining embodied knowledge, but also to engage with the discourse, as Kramer and Ebron suggest, that is, the language that is used to describe music, the people musicking, and the context of the practice of musicking within the context of meeting the new. I choose to focus on the interactions between the known and the unknown, and the complexities that result, and how existing frameworks of discourse about Africa and African musics colour how people think about and approach them.

¹⁴ Ricardo Trimillos, “Subject, Object, and the Ethnomusicology Ensemble,” *Performing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Representation in World Music Ensembles*, edited by Ted Solís, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 24.

¹⁵ Paula Ebron, *Performing Africa*, 30.

¹⁶ Lawrence Kramer, “Subjectivity Unbound: Music, Language, Culture,” *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Martin Clayton, (London: Routledge, 2012), 396.

Outline

This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first is this **introduction**. Chapter two is an overview of the **theories and methods** I employed in my research and discussion, as well as an brief look at the geography related to the music discussed and encountered in my fieldwork, which is also a topic in this chapter. The next chapter is intended to provide the reader with **background** historical information about Swedish connections to Africa and African music. Chapter four is split into two sections. In the first, the **Travelling Musicking Body**, I discuss and analyze the phenomenon of cultural-educational tourism trips to West Africa from Sweden and the geographical and social connections and interactions that are involved in making these trips possible. In the second section, the **Social Learning Musicking Body**, I describe and analyze the body's experience encountering new music, in this case West African polyrhythmic music, and the body's role in Ewe music. Finally, I close with chapter five and a **summary and reflection** on my findings.

Theory and Method

The Musicking Body

When we consciously focus on our own bodies, our bodies become both subjects and objects, doing and sensing, receiving input. It would seem that the body is separate from the mind, since the mind can perceive the body as a thing external to itself. However the cognitive act of perceiving and treating our body as an object as we consciously will it to DO something involves a cognitive process that is inherently part of the body, neither is without the other. Perception is a physical act of the body in the world, and new experiences are understood in the context of the body's previous experiences. The body learns to hear and move in response to new sounds in new unfamiliar ways, and it processes the new experiences from this framework. This framework of past experience and learned practices and structures, or *habitus* as Pierre Bourdieu called it,¹⁷ to which we refer in relation to music is no longer just a philosophically developed idea, but also now a neurologically observed phenomenon. A recent article by Teppo Särkämö, et. al., shows that hearing music “activates an extremely complex and wide/spread, bilateral network of cortical and subcortical areas that control many auditory, cognitive, sensory-motor and emotional functions,” including those involving “playing, singing and moving to the beat of music...recognizing music and recalling associated memories,” and “music-evoked emotions and experiencing pleasure and reward.”¹⁸ In my case study, I seek to understand how this manifests itself. In what way does the body act as both a subject and object when learning new music, and how does one's past experience impact upon their present encounter?

The sound of the voice, or any sound produced by the body can in a similar way seem separate from the body, an object. Its existence external to the body enables its being experienced by others. It is no longer experienced only by the body that produces it, but also by other bodies hearing it. ‘The Voice’ can thus be experienced as separate from the body to which it inextricably belongs, because it can be experienced outside that body. Matt Rahaim describes the split of the voice from the body that produces it as follows: “This commonsense split conceals an extra, hidden move: it identifies gesture with the material of the body and sublimates vocalization to ghostly, immaterial form.”¹⁹

¹⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 87-89.

¹⁸ Teppo Särkämö, et. al., “Music perception and cognition: development, neural basis, and rehabilitative use of music,” *Cognitive Science* 4 (2013): 441, accessed 27 July 2014, doi: 10.1002/wcs.1237.

¹⁹ Matthew Rahaim, *Musicking Bodies*, p. 88 of 187.

A drum is an external object, not part of the body that uses it to produce sound. It is easy to justify the distinction between the two. However, it is the body that makes the rhythms that sound from the drum, and the drum is nothing without a body to play it. The drum thus becomes an extension to the body that plays it, when it is being played, like an external voice box. It resonates when the body interacts with it in such a way to produce extra-corporeal sound waves that are open to any other body to hear.

In a similar way, dance can be an extension of the music. A dancing body both perceives music and engages with it physically through movement, action. All the drumming we learned on our trip to Ghana was inextricable from dance, although we didn't learn the dance to all the drumming we learned, nor did we learn to drum for the dancing we did. My previous experience with Ewe music enabled me to understand the drumming we learned in the context of what I already knew – I had learned Gahu, Gota and Agbekor styles as an undergraduate student in Canada. The music calls for specific movements from the dancers, and the musicians respond to the dancers' moves. A dancer moves his or her body as an extension and response to the music heard, connecting the two bodies together. The drummer responds to the dance, in particular if it is sweet, and the music becomes sweeter. The two bodies are connected, not by physical contact, but by the sounds and interactions that inspire physical response in each of them. In the context of doing Ewe music I'm interested in how the body interacts with the sound objects produced by voices and instruments, and the unspoken connections from person to person. What processes, for example, are occurring internally and externally when the body dances or drums, and how does the body fit itself in and become a part of the music in interaction with other bodies?

When we hear music we encounter the sound, but we also encounter the context of the sound. If it is live music, we see musicians, other members of the audience, instruments, the stage, the hall, and so on. We smell the odors of all the things and people there, we feel the texture of our seat or standing location and perhaps the vibrations of a booming bass. We taste the beverage or food we've consumed in the concert context. All these sensorial experiences refer back to previous experiences of the similar or dissimilar, and can influence how we understand and interpret what we encounter, and what kind of impact it has individually on the experience itself and on any meaning associated with it.²⁰

²⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, loc. 132 of 16102.

The following story is my own personal example of how one's experience of music is influenced by an his or her past, and how the experience of music in the present refers to one's experiences from the past.

I first heard Gustav Holst's orchestral suite, *The Planets*, on the CBC's Radio 1. Several years later, as a high school band student, I had the opportunity to play parts of it arranged for wind orchestra on the Euphonium. At that time, it was one of my favourite pieces to play due to the complex rhythms and the prominence of my instrument, which most often is unheard and unseen in the background. As a university student majoring in music I again had the opportunity to play an arrangement for Wind Orchestra. I looked forward to playing it: it was exciting and challenging, and the higher level of musicianship I and my fellow musicians had attained led to better quality performances and more satisfaction as a musician. Listening to recordings of it inspired the same feelings and physical responses as when I played it. The piece was also a favourite of my younger brothers, who were trombone players later in the same high school band I played in. When the older of the two passed away four friends and I played a section from the Jupiter movement arranged for Brass Quintet at his funeral. The next time I heard the piece was at a friend's sectional recital, where she and some colleagues played a similar arrangement. Overpowering my appreciation of the music musically was a deep feeling of sorrow that manifested as both a physical pain but also as tears, which I could not hold back. More recently I heard the Jupiter movement at an open-air concert on a warm sunny day. Although the environment was generally warm and positive, my earlier experiences of the music left me with a sad, heavy feeling and I could not hold back tears.

The point of this story is not to prove that our experience of music changes, although that is part of it, but rather to show that the perception of experience is highly influenced by previous encounters with the familiar and how our thought processes come to assign meaning to them. If my brother had not liked *The Planets*, or if he had not died, my experience of the music would not be the same. After his death, the music he listened to and liked became more valuable by its association with him, and invoked both memories of him, and feelings of loss. The significance of the music for me changed and my experience of it also changed.

In a similar fashion a song can come to be significant for individuals in a love relationship with each other, and evoke specific sensorial responses that refer to a past experience, say a first dance, that other songs from the same time period but different contexts may not evoke.

Previous experiences affect and influence our perceptions and understanding of the present not just when it comes to music, but also in all other aspects of life. What I'd like to understand better is what kind of impact the participants' personal and shared history had on their experiencing of our trip to Ghana.

Music seems to act on the listener, as much as it is an object created by the musician(s). A listening body receives and processes the auditory information provided by music, much like it receives and processes any other kind of sensorial information, such as the light of a streetlamp on a dark night, the wetness of the rain, the scent of a flower (or dog poo on a melting spring day). A musicking body, that is a body that is doing music, both receives and creates music. It is at once doing and the object of the doing. The music is felt internally, and received from the external. Musicking bodies are both subjects and objects making and receiving sound, and much more, as Matt Rahaim describes within the context of Hindu vocal music: "Perhaps most importantly, the musicking body is alive, intelligent, and conscious. Its motion, its sounding, and its cognition are all brought together in a single intentional field of presence. Freedom to improvise is not a result of liberation from the hands, throat, and breath – it is in the incarnation of a musicking body trained to move freely in intimately known raga spaces, to gracefully retain and pretend melodic action within metric cycles, to build and manipulate compelling melodic objects."²¹

Ethnographic Fieldwork

When a person listens to or practices music, the whole body is involved, and when a person encounters new music, particularly music of an unfamiliar place or space, he or she is confronted with a new aesthetic and perhaps an unfamiliar or unexpected physical response to the music. I have chosen to shape my methods around the body and its experiences in encountering and learning new music, and new places.

I participated in a cultural-educational tourism trip to Ghana with a group of Swedes. This trip forms the foundation of my research and I use it as a case study to illustrate some possible answers to questions about meeting the new, learning new music and being in music. I was the only student-participant on the trip that didn't grow up in Sweden or identify myself in terms of nationality as Swedish only. For this reason I am a bit of an outsider (and our trip leader often introduced me to new Ghanaians as the "Canadian" white person, which set me apart from my Swedish colleagues). However, nationality or ethnic identity is less important in this study than

²¹ Matthew Rahaim, *Musicking Bodies*, p. 90 of 187.

the meeting between the familiar and the unfamiliar. All of us student-participants were participating on the trip at least partly to engage and interact with the unfamiliar, though we all had previously been in contact with some African dance or drum tradition in Sweden (and in my case also in Canada). In some way, then, we all shared a similar perspective, and one could also conclude that, coming from Sweden, we all shared a similar musical background in terms of what we had been exposed to through various forms of media throughout our lives.

I chose to do ethnographic fieldwork as a means of collecting material, and following is a description of which particular methods I employed. I also give a brief description towards the end of this section of the field and how I applied these methods in the field.

Participant Observation

H. Russell Bernard describes this method like this: “Participant observation involves immersing yourself in a culture and learning to remove yourself every day from that immersion so you can intellectualize what you’ve seen and heard, put it into perspective, and write about it convincingly.”²² A critical part of the immersion of oneself is the practice of learning to embody the practices of the culture one is studying. That is, doing – moving the body – in the way the people you are studying do, learning their gestures and postures, in addition to other aspects of being. This is how I chose to approach my fieldwork in Ghana, in daily life circumstances, but also and especially during my dance and drum lessons. Focus on the body and what the body is doing and the imitation thereof is essential in any attempt to grasp a physical experience. The difficulty with participant-observation is that one cannot record one’s own experiences as one is experiencing them, but must do so at a different time and place. This means that the recorded experience is not a record of the experience itself, but a verbally recorded representation of the experience, a memory of an experience and all the impressions it left behind.

Interviews

During my fieldwork I conducted both informal interviews and semistructured interviews. Informal interviewing is completely unstructured communication and most often takes the form of informal conversation in the course of the day. This unstructured, unplanned format resulted in a lot of notes and jottings, which were later developed into field notes. This proved to be the most effective method of gathering information from the other Swedish participants in the

²² H. Russell Bernard, *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, (Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2011), 258.

group, especially since we spent most of our ‘free’ time together – we shared two meals a day, and often spent social time together during the evenings.

Semistructured interviewing is a more structured conversation around previously determined topics or questions. I chose to do semistructured interviews with my instructors, with whom my time was limited and structured, and for whom I had specific questions. I made audio recordings of these three interviews as well as field notes of them and of the informal interviews.

Data

The majority of my field notes were descriptive in nature and an attempt to capture events and happenings. Field notes can be biased from the perspective of the observer, which is one of the difficulties with participant observation in general, and it is important to acknowledge that what was observed was what I, the observer, perceived. However, my focus on the body’s experience seems to be complementary to the practice of participant observation in that I am drawing very much from my own bodily experience and using other observations as complementary to that. I cannot know what other bodies experience, nor do I intend to claim so or project my bodily experience onto all the other participants’. I also gathered a lot of material in the form of audio and video recordings. The recordings I collected serve well to illustrate and recall the physical experience I later describe, and often evoke physical and aural memories of events and music, which I found to be particular helpful, especially in discussing particular musical aspects of West African polyrhythmic music and the body’s participation in it.

Transcriptions

In the footsteps of ethnomusicologists before me, and as a help to the Western tradition from which I come, I have transcribed music from my observations and recordings into Western notation. I have decided, in contrast to common practice, to include the rhythms of body movements in my transcriptions. The dancing body and its movements are as important as the sounding drum or voice in many of the styles I encountered, and as Chernoff says, “the African orchestra is not complete without a participant on the other side.”²³ Leaving out the dance is like leaving out the drum kit in a pop tune. It is as much a part of these musics as any of the drums or songs and often dance movements provide the beat that isn’t a part of the sound. The body’s experience relies not simply on the sounds heard, but also on its own participation: it hears and

²³ John Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, 50.

does. I have transcribed the Agbadza and Agbekor styles into a 12/8 time signature, and Gahu, Gota and Sikchyi into a 4/4 time signature.

Location

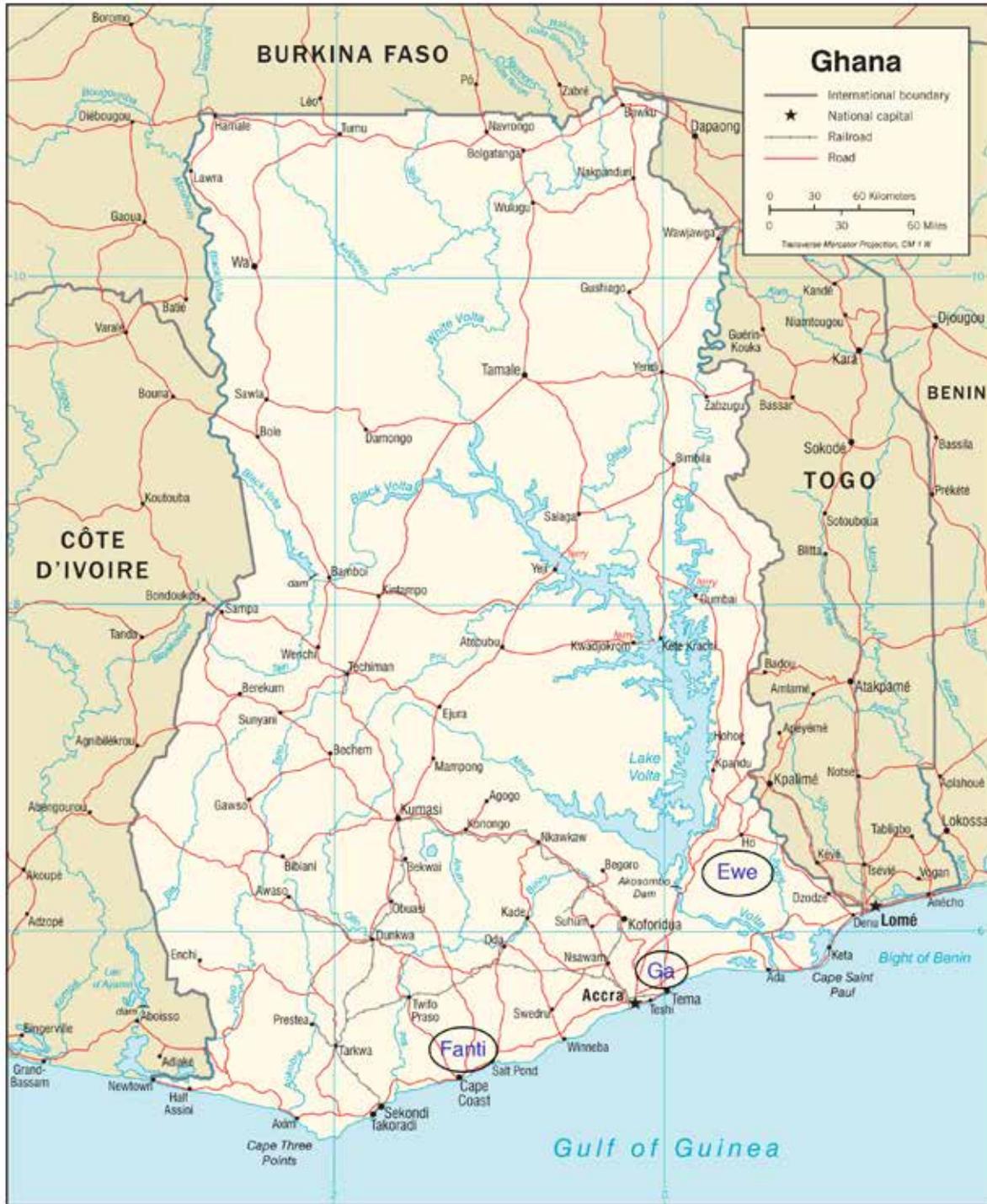
I chose to do a multi-sited ethnographic investigation in George Marcus' sense that the technique by which I define my object of study is to follow a group of people as they travelled from one place to another, and to follow the connections and relationships between the two places.²⁴ My two primary locales are Stockholm, Sweden and Teshi-Nungua, Ghana. I spent time with my subjects travelling from one location to the other, gathering material and doing participant observations. Because the object of my study, the musicking body, was "mobile and multiply situated," as Marcus says, there is a "comparative dimension that is integral to it, in the form of juxtapositions of phenomena that conventionally have appeared to be (or conceptually have been) 'worlds apart.'"²⁵ I think this is most evident in my discussion of the body's experience of musicking and meeting new music in terms of relating the familiar to the unfamiliar.

Most of my time in Ghana was spent in a region dominated by the Ga ethnic group, but interestingly, most of the material gathered related to the Ewe ethnic group, and some to the Fanti ethnic group. Accra and its suburbs attracts internal migrants, so it is no surprise that people of many ethno-linguistic groups live there, nor that the music we encountered was not traditionally associated with that geographical area. These aspects of the journey do play a role in my discussion of shared geographical connections, but they could be investigated further in a more in-depth study.

²⁴ George Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 106, accessed September 3, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2155931>.

²⁵ George Marcus, "Ethnography in/of the World System," 102.

Image 1: Map of Ghana, with traditional lands of the Fanti, Ga and Ewe ethnic groups marked.²⁶



²⁶ CIA. *Ghana Transportation, Map*, Scale not given, 2007, accessed July 28, 2014, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/cia-maps-publications/map-downloads/Ghana_Transportation.jpg/image.jpg. Labels added by me with information from Mendoza, 2002 and www.ethnologue.com, accessed 28 July 2014.

The Field

For the purposes of this thesis, the field is in Ghana and Sweden, but some of the material is based on my previous experience as a drummer, dancer and singer in the West African Music Ensemble at the University of Alberta.

During my four and a half years as an undergraduate student in the Bachelor of Music program at the University of Alberta I was a student in the West African Music Ensemble where I first came in contact with Ewe drumming and dancing traditions. The classes were structured so that all participants had a relatively equal opportunity to learn and do both drumming and dancing, although in the beginning of the academic year it was often more experienced members who played the drum parts while the rest of the group learned the dance. Singing was also an integral part of the class, and all students were required to sing in addition to dancing and drumming. The integration of the three: drumming, dancing and singing, was important and resulted in a well-rounded learning process. When I first started we had an American and a Ghanaian teacher, but in the latter years a Togolese teacher took over responsibility for the class from our American professor and our Ghanaian teacher remained. We often heard origin stories of the songs and dances we learned, and also watched videos of performances from Ghana. I became particularly proficient at two styles called Gahu and Atsia Agbekor. This experience and previous knowledge inspired me to choose to focus on West African music and informed and aided my learning during my fieldwork in Sweden and Ghana.

In Sweden I met the group Baadjoo and attended two of their rehearsals. I also interviewed one of the dancers and attended some of her dance classes and a workshop. Baadjoo performs traditional West African music of several cultural groups, as taught to them by Emmanuel Gomado, a Ghanaian who lives and works in Germany, but is also active in Ghana, previously having been a drummer, dancer and instructor at Ghana's National Arts Council. In 1989 Emmanuel founded Odehe Centre, a school for traditional drumming and dancing. The centre is located just outside Accra in Teshi on the coast. Many of the members of Baadjoo have traveled there for instruction, but Emanuel has also taught them here in Sweden and in Germany. I only recorded the interview I did with the dancer, but did not record any of the classes, rehearsals or the workshop.

I also had the opportunity to join a three-week cultural-educational tourism trip to Ghana, which was arranged by a Swedish drummer and composer who has travelled and lived in Ghana and other parts of West Africa on and off for the past several decades, Kristina Aspeqvist. Prior to

our physical journey to Africa, she arranged for several information meetings at her drum shop in Bagarmossen, where she sells drums and other West African items, and holds drum classes. The other participants live in various cities around Sweden and two separate meetings were scheduled to accommodate everyone's schedules. During the information meetings we discussed practicalities, but were also given some tips on Ghanaian culture, and literature to read on the subject of Ghanaian music, customs and tourism.

Once in Ghana I stayed together with my fellow travellers, Kristina and our drum teacher Doe Kushiator at a small guest house in Teshi-Nungua, outside of Accra. We shared five huts and two apartment-style rooms. I had some, but rather limited contact with the local population, as much of our time was spent in dance or drum lessons, arranged outings, or for the evening meal, or a swim (and shower) and an internet break at a nearby hotel. Those I did have brief contact with were always polite and friendly, and curious. Walking down the street to catch a taxi or buy a bag of water often elicited calls of "Obolo," which is a complementary term for voluptuous women. The artificial and highly organized character of the trip restricted both contact with local people and participation in the daily life, and we, the "Obruni" (whites), never achieved any sort of normalcy or integration into the population.

The short nature of the trip meant that any in depth investigation into daily life or musical habits was impossible, as was the forging of long-term relationships outside of our small circle of travellers from Sweden, and our Ghanaian teachers and guides. This small group formed my primary informants, and our interviews and discussions informed my choice to focus on the body and its experience in doing West African music and dance. I made video and audio recordings of the last week and a half of the dance and drum lessons (41 audio recordings and 52 video recordings). I chose to use the first week and a half as a 'getting into the field' period, and during that time I got to know the participants and teachers better, and could as a result choose the focus of my remaining work and recordings. For these recordings I used a tripod to position the camera and the audio recording device and left them to record, so that I could participate as much as possible in the dance and drum lessons. This meant that I was unable to focus with my recordings on a particular person or thing at a particular moment, but rather a general sense of what was going on, while at the same time being and doing in these moments, which was in many ways more valuable.

The drum lessons consisted of group lessons in which we learned the lead drum and supporting drum parts for the Ewe Gahu style and some of the lead drum part of Agbadza style. I also took extra drum lessons on my own and learned the Atsimevu and Sogo drum parts (also the lead

drums) for the Ewe Gota style. During the dance lessons we learned choreographies using traditional movements, which we danced to the Sikchyi style of the Fanti people and Agbadza style of the Ewe people.

My prior experience and knowledge of Ewe music and culture was complemented by my short time in Ghana. As a result of the deliberately short length of the trip I feel that I am unable to make any particular conclusions about it or West African Music, life and culture. However, this was not the intent of the trip, nor the main focus of my research questions. It has certainly been rewarding and rich from a first person experiential perspective, and this is how I choose to discuss and present my material.

Historical Connections Between Sweden and Africa

In this section I have chosen to give an overview of historical connections between Sweden and Africa. The purpose of this is to understand how perspectives on Africa have evolved and changed over the centuries, and to show generally how this history influences or can influence impressions and attitudes about Africa, as well as transnational interactions between Sweden and Africa today. This is relevant in this case since the study revolves around a trip from Sweden to Africa. With this section I hope to answer what kinds of contact musically and otherwise have resulted from this transnational history.

As much as our new musical experiences are influenced by our past, so too is the way we perceive and meet new people and unfamiliar ways of being. It is not unexpected that we should develop incorrect or unfounded impressions of the new when the new we meet is beyond the realm of our known experience. This does not, however, excuse the furthering of such false views and attitudes as was common practice during the colonial period of Western civilization. This practice lingers today and I felt it was important to bring this part of Swedish history to light as a tool for understanding how Swedish society has changed and how old attitudes and views potentially colour how people (and the participants in my study) think and behave today, especially in the context of travel and tourism to West Africa from Sweden, and cultural consumption.

Swedish Connections to Africa

From the times of first contact with Sub-Saharan Africans, Europeans have tended to regard themselves as separate and superior. There has been a strong otherization particularly of sub-Saharan Africans, and the Western World's behaviour in acts of trade, exploration and colonization reflect as much. Despite a few examples to the contrary,²⁷ the tendency to otherize Africans and place oneself in a superior position has also dominated Swedish dealings with Africa.

Swedish-initiated connections to Africa trace back to the late 16th Century. Contact has historically been motivated by one or several of the following factors:

- Exploration

²⁷ I refer particularly to Carl Bernhard Wadström's testimony against slavery in British hearings on the subject in 1788 and the efforts of both Anders and Andries Stockenström to establish equal rights and equal treatment for Bantu-speaking people in Southern Africa in the early 19th century. Important to note about Wadström is that he still maintained a position of superiority in his beliefs, though opposing slavery and maltreatment of Africans.

- Colonization, particularly during Sweden's Great Power Era (Stormaktstid)
- Trade / Economic Gain
- Scientific Curiosity
- Religious Convictions
- Developmental Aid

The first documented contact occurred with North Africa in 1582, when Swede Erik Falck visited Egypt after having been dubbed Knight of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Trade dominated contact with Egypt and the rest of North Africa from this time to the mid-nineteenth century. Bribery and piracy on the part of the North Africans coloured trade relationships and cost Sweden significant sums despite North Africa being officially under Turkish control.²⁸

Sweden became interested in the prospects of establishing a colony on Africa's Gold Coast in the early seventeenth century for the purposes of engaging in trade of goods and slaves and acquiring natural resources such as gold.²⁹ Initially Sweden negotiated a contract to rent land and protection from the Futu King Bredewa, and established a colony in 1650 in Cape Coast, also known as Cabo Corso, in present-day Ghana. There the colony established a trading house and in 1652 began the construction of a fort.³⁰ The settlement was intended to facilitate trade between Europe, the Gold Coast and the Caribbean/the Americas.³¹ The Swedish colony at Cape Coast was plagued by conflicts with other European nations during its entire existence. In 1657 former governor Henry Carlof joined the Danish in an attack on the Castle and the Danish took over until 1660, when peace with Denmark re-established Swedish control. Cape Coast was lost forever to the Dutch in 1663 and with it, any Swedish hopes of establishing itself permanently on West Africa's coast.³²

Throughout the eighteenth century scientific exploration dominated contact with Africa. The influence of Carl Linnaeus was felt through his many students, who accompanied exploratory and trade expeditions to most of Africa's coastlines and beyond, documenting their discoveries of the natural world.³³

²⁸ A. Boëthius, ed., *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark: Svenska Öden Och Insatser i Främmande Land. [3], Övriga Världen: Latinamerika, Afrika, Asien Och Australien*, (Stockholm: Lindqvists förlag, 1953), 170-172.

²⁹ György Nováky, *Trading Companies and Company Trade: The Swedish African Company – A Study in Feudal Trade*, (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1990), Doctoral Dissertation, 130, 185.

³⁰ György Nováky, *Trading Companies and Company Trade*, 98, 105.

³¹ György Nováky, *Trading Companies and Company Trade*, 89.

³² A. Boëthius, *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark*, 144-147.

³³ A. Boëthius, *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark*, 147-149, 151.

Linnaeus' influence stretched beyond curiosity about the natural world, and his classificatory biology not only contributed to widespread otherization of Africans, but it served as the justification for widespread prejudice, discrimination and terrible acts of repression, abuse, torture and killing. Linnaeus considered there to be four species of humans: Americanus, Europaeus, Asiaticus and Afer. His description of Africans, or *Homo sapiens afer*, is shocking by today's standards: "Black, impassive, lazy. Hair kinked. Skin silky. Nose flat. Lips thick. Crafty, slow, foolish. Anoints himself with grease. Ruled by caprice."³⁴ Compare this to his description of Europeans, *Homo sapiens europaeus* at the time: "White, serious, strong. Hair blond, flowing. Eyes blue. Active, very smart, inventive. Covered by tight clothing. Ruled by laws."³⁵

This kind of distinction, of emphasizing difference (though the differences may be biased perceptions and in fact false) and elevating one's self over another, is necessary for the process of 'otherizing' someone or a group of people. Eugene L. Mendonsa defines the process here:

This is a cognitive process. It seems that noticing differences is easier than observing similarities. Human beings seem intent on defining someone with an obvious difference, skin color or hair type for example, as "other." I call this the process of "otherizing."³⁶

Otherization characterized all of European (and most of North and South American) contact with Africa and despite legal reforms and recognition of all humans as one race, the remnants of such attitudes live on, particularly in the current discourse of Swedish anti-immigrant parties such as the Sweden Democrats (Sverige Demokraterna) and The Swedes' Party (Svenskarnas Parti).

The eighteenth century also brought the first wave of faith-motivated travel to Africa. In the latter part of the century, attempts were made to establish a religious colony on Africa's West Coast, based on teachings and beliefs of Emanuel Swedenborg. Swedenborg's revelations included an image of Africans, and particularly black Africans, as a mild race of child-like people who were special to God, a discourse that continued to belittle and otherize Africans.³⁷

Swedenborg's goal was to build a new Jerusalem: a community of believers alongside the local population, with the intention of 'civilizing' and converting them. King Gustav III gave Carl

³⁴ Eugene L. Mendonsa, *West Africa: An Introduction to its History, Civilization and Contemporary Situation*, (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2002), 300.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Eugene L. Mendonsa, *West Africa*, 299.

³⁷ A. Boëthius, *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark*, 151.

Bernhard Wadström permission to establish a colony in the spirit of Swedenborg. The king's interests lay however not in religious or humanitarian causes, but rather in trade, colonization and scientific research.³⁸ Wadström, the Swedenborg settlers and two scientists, Anders Sparrman & Carl Axel Arrhenius, arrived off the coast of Senegal in October 1787. Attempts to find a suitable location and establish a colony were fruitless, and any scientific work that may have occurred went undocumented. The group returned to Europe after three months. In 1791, the Swedenborg followers had a second chance to return to Africa with a group of freed slaves from England, sent back to Africa to re-establish themselves in Sierra Leone.³⁹

Swedes were also settling in other parts of Africa at this time. In the 1770s Vice Notary Anders Stockenström traveled to South Africa and settled there, marrying a Dutch woman. He made a career for himself as a public official and in 1803 became the *landdrost* or Reeve of the Cape Province's eastern district, which was also an area of conflict between white colonizers and the local Bantu people, mainly the Khoikhoi and San. After his death, his son Andries took over his position and in his father's footsteps, he sought peaceful conflict resolution and just treatment of not only Khoikhoi and San people, but also of mixed race people. Andries moved his family to Sweden in 1833 as a result of much ill will against him on the part of colonizers and the governors in Cape Town, which was the result of his work on behalf of the Bantu. He returned on Britain's bidding as the deputy governor of the Eastern Cape Province and introduced a system of treaties of cohabitation between whites and blacks, with the assumption that such agreements would lead to the civilization and Christian conversion of the local people. Many of the white colonizers strongly disagreed with his methods, left Cape Province and settled elsewhere, killing many Bantu as they settled. This killing & resettlement eventually led to the Boer War. Several Years later, Stockenström was forced to retire. His impact on the region left a lasting, though controversial legacy.⁴⁰

Europeans in Early nineteenth century South Africa were bent on inland exploration and discovery, and there was no shortage of Swedish scientists, tradespeople and adventurers to be found. One, Charles John Andersson, as a result of his exploratory adventures ended up as a military leader and later chief of a group of Damara people.⁴¹ The exploration of the interior of Africa played a significant role in jump-starting the annexation and exploitation of Africa and its resources. Aside from Andersson, hundreds of other Swedes participated in European

³⁸ A. Boëthius, *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark*, 153.

³⁹ Eugene L. Mendonsa, *West Africa*, 296.

⁴⁰ A. Boëthius, *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark*, 159-161.

⁴¹ A. Boëthius, *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark*, 162.

expeditions inland, working, among other things as sailors and machinists in fluvial transport, some ending up as volunteer Boer soldiers in the Boer War.⁴²

Swedish Christian Missionaries were officially present on the African continent starting in the nineteenth century, and their experiences and understanding of African psychology and sociology are the foundation of what forms common knowledge with regards to Africa today.⁴³

Sweden's presence in Africa in the twentieth century has been characterized by the activities of faith-based missions and developmental aid, with a particular focus on Southern Africa.⁴⁴

Beginning in the 1930's the Swedish Red Cross established an ambulance service in Ethiopia.⁴⁵ Developmental Aid policies were developed and refined in the 1960's alongside increased Swedish engagement with the ongoing Apartheid in South Africa.⁴⁶

An increased self-awareness and acknowledgement in the latter half of the 20th century of Swedish (and Western) condescending attitudes towards and otherization of Africans and their traditions culminated in a reassessment of Swedish policies on development and aid in Africa.⁴⁷ A multi-party study was conducted with African and Swedish participants and the result was a recommendation that further policies be characterized by partnership and equal participation of those involved, rather than the traditional Swedish-dominated top-down decision-making. As the study concluded,

If Africans are again to become the subjects of their destiny, and not the object of somebody else's design, and if we are ever to approach equality in the still unequal relations between Africa and the world, then it is the capacity of African societies, their governments and people, to analyse, choose and shape that must be strengthened.⁴⁸

In 1998, the cabinet of the Swedish Social Democrat government sent a communication to parliament informing them of the government's intentions to adopt many of the recommendations of the study as policy for future contact with Africa.⁴⁹ In 2002 the government

⁴² A. Boëthius, *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark*, 164-165.

⁴³ A. Boëthius, *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark*, 167.

⁴⁴ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries: Images of Music in Southern Africa," *Svensk Tidskrift för Musikforskning* 8 (2005), accessed April 9, 2013, http://musikforskning.se/stmonline/vol_8/thorsen/index.php?menu=3.

⁴⁵ A. Boëthius, *Vår Svenska Stam på Utländsk Mark*, 168.

⁴⁶ Lennart Wohlgemuth, "Swedish Relations and Policies Towards Africa," *Nordic Countries and Africa: Old and New Relations*, edited by Lennart Wohlgemuth (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2002), 44-45, accessed March 28, 2013, <http://nai.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:241759>.

⁴⁷ Lennart Wohlgemuth, "Swedish Relations and Policies Towards Africa," 48.

⁴⁸ Lennart Wohlgemuth, "Swedish Relations and Policies Towards Africa," 49.

⁴⁹ Regeringens skrivelse 1997/98:122, *Afrika i förändring: En förnyad svensk Afrikapolitik inför 2000-talet*, 1998.

updated this policy⁵⁰ and a specific strategy with regards to West Africa was published by the Department of Foreign Affairs in 2004.⁵¹

Given the relatively short period since the political shift towards equity in Swedish-African relationships it is no surprise that discourse in some areas of the public sphere should continue to reflect lingering ideas of the exotic African who is less capable of determining his or her own destiny than the 'benevolent,' wiser and economically better-off European.

In the following section I will examine the role missionaries played in bringing Swedish musics to Africa, and African musics to Sweden as a way of better understanding how we talk about and think about 'African Music.'

Missionaries, Music and What We 'Know' About Africa

Swedish awareness of and attitudes towards Africa and African ways of life have been highly coloured by Missionary accounts.⁵² Swedish missionaries (and other non-missionaries in Sweden), like many other Europeans in Africa, assumed a position of superiority over African peoples. Their goal was to civilize and save Africans, often encouraging them to or demanding that they reject their own practices and traditions and adopt Western ones. Stig-Magnus Thorsén illustrates as much in his description of how in the late nineteenth century, missionary Hedvig Posse used Swedish melodies in her work while ignoring and excluding African ones.⁵³

There was occasionally an interesting contradiction in Swedish missionaries' treatment of Africans. On the one hand there existed an attitude that African people are primitive and need to be saved and civilized. On the other, as the below example demonstrates, Africans are people as any other, to be treated with respect and dignity:

It is significant that she [Posse] out of her own standards and values met Africans with respect but on her own conditions. She showed evidence of a treatment in acknowledgement of their individual integrity, but overlooked their collective culture. She acclaimed their potential to learn the music that she carried from Sweden.⁵⁴

This was not always the case, however, as in the mid-nineteenth century there was much discrimination, racism, and treatment of black Africans as a less evolved form of human beings.

⁵⁰ Departamentsserie Ds 2002:36, *Afrika i förändring – uppdatering*, 2002.

⁵¹ Regionstrategi UD 04.038, *Regionstrategi: Västafrika 2004-2006*, 2004.

⁵² Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries."s

⁵³ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries."

⁵⁴ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries."

It is important to place these attitudes within the wider context of European thought during the mid-nineteenth century, not as a means of excusing such actions, but as a way for us in the present to understand the past behaviour of missionaries and other Europeans in their encounters with Africans, and how this pattern of behaviour, or habitus, has influenced present actions.

Self-awareness of one's tendency to otherize was limited even to the mid-twentieth century, when missionary and organist Henry Weman traveled through Southern Africa documenting and recording African music. He was one of the more liberal Europeans in that he supported the practice of African Music and even admired what he observed to be quality musicianship. He did not, however, accept it as music to be regarded of equal value or importance to European music, an attitude evident in his comments below regarding the African music he encountered:

One cannot help being reminded of music of the less developed sects, in which coarse folk music and dance is allowed to develop unchecked, without either finesse or polish in movement or voice (p.188).⁵⁵

In some ways Weman took a fairly open standpoint to African music, encouraging the integration of African music into Church services and liturgy, while at the same time positioning it as primitive and undeveloped music⁵⁶ and doubting the ability of Africans to learn European music.⁵⁷ Here Weman plays into the discourse about 'African Music' as exotic and simplistic.

Part of the legacy of Weman's African adventure was the Zulu music he brought back to Sweden with the intention of including it in the Church of Sweden's liturgy. This is perhaps one of the earliest seeds of African music to be planted on Swedish Soil.⁵⁸

Missionaries in Africa prior to the mid-twentieth century seemed blind to the concept of music having social-cultural function. Olof Axelsson, a musician and missionary played a role in changing just that. He recognized that that music used by Africans around him had a variety of social and religious functions overlooked by earlier missionaries. He pointed out that missionaries and anthropologists too often lacked a deeper knowledge of music in Africa, and that their Eurocentric methods had given wrong conclusions. He promoted a new method, a dialogue between European and African scholars in development of a new, more relevant

⁵⁵ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries," 11 of 26.

⁵⁶ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries," 13 of 26.

⁵⁷ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries," 14 of 26.

⁵⁸ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries," 14 of 26.

musicology. Axelsson also supported renewal of the music in the African Churches much in line with Weman's, including responsorial singing, downdrift in melody, adherence to tonal pattern of the language, polyrhythmic structure, and both parallel and contrapuntal motions in multipart music.⁵⁹

Although the mid-twentieth century introduced a more reflexive approach to Africa, Thorsén describes Olof Axelsson's approach as "disregarding the amount of scholarship already available on the continent."⁶⁰ His new method, focused on preservation of music & instruments that are going 'extinct', was in a way as much a Western imposition as previous methods had been. It seems that Axelsson took a more reflexive approach to the music he encountered in Africa, not considering it as something less or more primitive than European music, but at the same time regarding it as an exotic object to be preserved and recorded, thus confirming a discourse of difference and exoticism.

The continued practice of using African traditions in certain contexts outside of Africa demonstrates a continued otherization of Africa, its people and traditions despite this shift towards reflexivity and increased 'global awareness'. Thorsén discusses this in relation to commercialized African musics:

In the name of commercial World Music and in many other cultural relations, Africa has been utilised, as a cultural source, which can fulfil the need of an Exotic Other. The stereotyped difference is a necessity for such an attitude, and is seemingly hard to get rid of. Even if many musicians and music connoisseurs have followed Axelsson's deeper engagement in African musical life, the dominant image mirrors the needs of Northern urbanised "modern people."⁶¹

Similarly, Paula Ebron shows how the whole concept 'African Music' not only emphasizes difference, but also oversimplifies and exoticizes all African musics by packaging them into one broad general term within what she describes as "a recurring framework of discourse"⁶² in anthropology, musicology and ethnomusicology. This 'site of speech' has tended to pit Western Art Music against African Music, associating Western Art Music with the complex, the distinct, the genius and the individuated, and African Music with the communal, the simple, and the rhythmically repetitive. She has found such ideas to dominate language about African Music among both researchers and the general population and gives examples of some comments she

⁵⁹ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries," 19 of 26.

⁶⁰ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries," 21 of 26.

⁶¹ Stig-Magnus Thorsén, "Three Swedish Missionaries," 21 of 26.

⁶² Paula Ebron, *Performing Africa*, 30.

encountered in her research: ““African music is all drumming”; “It’s rhythm”; “It is the heartbat that just makes you want to get up”; “It is noise and not music”; “African music is so primal.””⁶³

In my own conversations with people in Sweden and European participants on my trip to Ghana similar phrases or concepts often surfaced, with an additional focus on the physicality of African Music and how physical well-being could be associated with it, as well as how the body’s participation in ‘African Music’ enabled a sense of connection to the earth, a ‘grounding.’ The fact of their participation in this framework of discourse is evidence of the influence historical attitudes and beliefs has had, but it is also indicative of their own first-hand experience with the music and its impact on them personally. The participation in and repetition of the discourse is also indicative of its influence, conscious or not, on the notions of what African Music is and on the way the body responds to it. I will further discuss these topics in the next chapter.

Throughout this chapter we have seen how historical judgements of Africans as an inferior and different people have evolved into a discourse of differentiation and exoticization. This framework of discourse has survived for centuries and has impacted policies and individual ways of being and thinking in relation to Africans and African musics. The reflexive turn of the last century has started to change this, but as Paula Ebron points out, and as I encountered in my discussions with participants, the framework of discourse about ‘African Music’ is difficult to escape.

⁶³ Paula Ebron, *Performing Africa*, 39.

The Body, Musicking and on the Move

The first-hand experience of music and its impact on the musicking body is interesting in this context, and here I will present my case study: the musical education trip to Ghana from Sweden. In **The Traveling Musicking Body** I will document and describe how connections to people and places, as well as ideas and notions of African Music were the impetus for many of the participants to travel to Ghana, and consider how Ewe music has become a cultural object that can be purchased and sold – a commodity. I will also consider how the act of consuming culture is also an act of differentiation. In **The Social, Learning Musicking Body** I will investigate the body's negotiation with a new and unfamiliar music, and how it adapts its behavior to acquire the new music. I will discuss how preconceptions and expectations influence a listener's experience of music, and I will also show through transcriptions, audio and video examples how the body fits in with the music itself, and how the way the body feels the music impacts how it fits into the music. I will also discuss how the act of musicking is inherently a social act, and how interaction with other bodies is an important part of it.

The Traveling Musicking Body

As I mentioned previously, a discourse of difference has dominated language about Africa and influenced the lens through which Western eyes see Africa. For many Westerners, the term 'Africa' recalls aid agencies' ads portraying sick, hungry, impoverished children or refugees fleeing war in extremely humble, even unsanitary living conditions. The intention of these ads is to elicit a donation of funds to the organization by evoking viewer sympathy or even guilt over the stark contrast to Western standards of living and the perceived suffering of the people portrayed. Westerners travel there with this packed in their baggage along with the above-mentioned notions of what African Music is, whether they are conscious of it or not.

Difference is also performed in the economic transactions and interpersonal communications that Westerners have with Africans. Ebron gives as an example the bureaucratic process of developmental aid distribution, describing how aid is distributed by economically powerful aid organizations for projects that fall into a certain category whose definition is understood differently by the different parties involved. Each party also has its own understanding of what is a development priority in the nation seeking developmental aid. She describes the encounter as a re-enactment of "familiar global divides: North/South; modern/development; world lender/Third World recipient; interrogator/defendant."⁶⁴ Within this context the aid distributors

⁶⁴ Paula Ebron, *Performing Africa*, 5-9.

and aid recipients play out these roles of dominant/subordinate and by doing so confirm their own position within the cycle of aid distribution to developing countries. In this section I will discuss how economic disparity and curiosity about a cultural other were performed on my trip to Ghana by the Swedish participants and the Ghanaian hosts.

Cultural-educational tourism trips to West Africa are one of an increasing number of ways a Swede can have the opportunity to come into contact with West African culture in West Africa, and a West African can come into contact with a Swede. Such trips are not uncommon in Sweden, and a variety of actors arrange trips to, among other destinations, The Gambia, Ghana and Senegal. The Swedes I travelled with to Ghana expressed several reasons for taking the trip: for a vacation, to engage with and learn about life in Ghana, to dance, for physical well-being, to learn drumming and dancing first-hand from Ghanaians. This list shows several things about the participants on this trip and possibly about others who travel to Ghana and other parts of Africa on similar trips. First, that the participants have the economic means to pay for flights, accommodation, and lessons in Ghanaian music, and that they are financially stable enough to take time away from working without threatening their standard of living. Second, that the participants are curious about Ghanaian life and culture. They identify it as different and unknown, but want to learn more and in some sense expand their knowledge base and experience of people in the world. Third, that the participants have an interest in African Music, that their interest focuses on drumming and dancing, and that they want to experience it in Africa with African teachers, which perhaps lends to a sense of authenticity. And fourth, that they experience or expect to experience a change in their physical well-being by doing drumming and dancing. Later in this chapter I will discuss how connections between people and places have given rise to cultural trips like the one described above.

Cultural Commodities

The expectation of and desire to consume and acquire culture is both explicit and implicit in the participants' statements above, though it may not be consciously thought of as such by them – none of them described it in those particular terms. Paula Ebron has described how some African countries started to promote culture as a commodity in the 1980s. She includes in her definition of the term culture “that set of goods and practices now being fashioned into a commodity for international consumers. I use the term to refer to performances, stories, art objects, clothing, folklore, and traditional knowledge that draw from a long local heritage at the

same time that these artifacts are fashioned anew for the market,”⁶⁵ which recalls Theodor W. Adorno’s discussion of culture packaged as a commodity in his article, “The Culture Industry.”⁶⁶ The cultural industry Adorno refers to is not exactly the same as what we encountered in Ghana in that the Ghanaian industry does not necessarily consist of mass-produced manufactured products of culture, and sometimes the products don’t necessarily come from a “long, local heritage,” but it is nonetheless an industry in that the products are somewhat uniform in style, created through commercialized work and transformed into merchandise. An economic value has been assigned to a practice or an object associated with culture or cultural capital (in Pierre Bourdieu’s sense of the term, cultural competence – or a practice embodied by the practitioner, or goods – objects “which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.,” or institutionalized capital – an institutionally certified cultural competence such as an academic degree or other academic qualifications.)⁶⁷ and it is produced and reproduced for the purpose of producing financial gain.

All of us participants actuated our intent to consume culture in several ways. We paid for lessons in drumming and dancing, or the transfer of a kind of embodied knowledge highly associated with a particular place and people and specific social practices and contexts – a kind of cultural knowledge. We also bought artifacts and objects that symbolized culture: cloths with specific patterns, clothing, drums, beads and other items – culturally dense things which were often priced out of reach for most Ghanaians and targeted to tourists.

At the same time as we participants consumed culture, our Ghanaian hosts commodified culture. Our dance teacher taught us dances that were both choreographed and modified to suit our Western way of hearing and moving. She taught us exercises to teach us to hear, and warm-up dances to teach us how to move our bodies in the appropriate way, all of which was performed with Ghanaians in a traditional-looking hut. The experience of learning to dance and the setting in which we did it was a well-prepared and packaged cultural experience, which we Westerners could acquire by economic transaction. She had previously ‘sold’ the same experience to other Europeans, and continued to do so after we left. In addition, she was and is active in Germany teaching the same and similar practices there, effectively acting as an exporter of Ghanaian culture. Our drum lessons were not as neatly packaged, but the result was the same: an accessible

⁶⁵ Paula Ebron, *Performing Africa*, 22-23.

⁶⁶ Theodor W. Adorno and Rafael Cook, “The Culture Industry,” *Cinéaste*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (1971-1972), 9, accessed August 17, 2014. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42707539>.

⁶⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” in *Handbook of Theory for the Sociology of Education*, edited by J.E. Richardson, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 47.

Ewe traditional cultural practice that we could learn and take home with us (along with traditional, hand-made drums to play on). All of the Ghanaians involved worked very hard to make us feel comfortable, to help us learn to drum and dance, and to make our experience positive – a level of service which felt very oriented to our expectations.

The act of buying cultural souvenirs or paying for lessons in traditional drumming and dancing differentiated us from the Ghanaians who were producing these things for consumption. A very talented Ghanaian dancer told me that it was hard to find work performing and teaching dancing and drumming, because Ghanaians perceived these practices as something that everyone inherently could do. Paying for lessons in the way we did or paying for a performance was very much an outsider thing to do, an indication of our difference.

Economic Power Relations

Economic transaction is embedded in the consumption of culture, and inequality in economic transactional power was an underlying current during our trip to Ghana. The ability to take such a trip is in itself a statement of economic status and emphasizes the mobility of the Westerner in relation to the relative immobility of the average Ghanaian. It implies also a relative wealth and a certain level of purchasing power. In this case the cultural tourist to Ghana has a higher position in terms of class in Ghana than most Ghanaians, although this may not be true in his or her home country. The shift in class occurs as a result of the traveller's shift in location, a phenomenon Floya Anthias describes as Translocational Positionality – processes by which a person's social position, and the resulting differences or inequalities are produced by their social place at a particular time.⁶⁸

This perceived class difference manifested itself in various ways. Taxi drivers would generally try to charge us 1 or 2 cedis more than they would a Ghanaian, as they had perceived and previously experienced that white people (read Westerners) could and would pay more. Most days, someone would come to our guest house persistently trying to sell cultural objects and other commodities with the expectation that we could and would buy them, and many of us did. On the day that I went into the market in downtown Accra with my Ghanaian guide, I noticed that I was accosted far more often by people walking through selling things than any Ghanaian was. By the end of my three weeks I was overwhelmed by the constant expectation that I would buy

⁶⁸ Floya Anthias, "Intersections and Translocations: New Paradigms for Thinking About Cultural Diversity and Social Identities," *European Educational Research Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2011): 213, accessed September 3, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2304/eej.2011.10.2.204>.

something or give someone money, and at the same time I felt obligated to do so and guilty when I didn't or couldn't. Some participants felt the same, but other participants expressed having no problem with buying these objects – regardless of whether or not the object was something the participant wanted – and saw it as a sort of act of kindness. They were both giving a person of perceived weaker economic standing money in exchange for the good in a transactional way rather than a charitable way, and by doing so enabling that person to improve his or her private economy and status as a seller of cultural objects.

Interconnectedness, Networks, Relationships

Spending time with us Westerners was also a way for the Ghanaians we met to improve their status within the community, according to our trip leader, and improve their social capital – their potential resources based on network of social connections.⁶⁹ A connection with a white person seemed to inspire a whole series of imagined possibilities and potential ladders up in the world. Connections between, relationships with and networks of people drive the exchange of knowledge, goods and power.

Transnational travel and cultural consumption and exchange could not occur today without such a complex web of relationships, interactions and connections, what many would describe in technological terms as a network, and which Ulf Hannerz has called a Global Ecumene, the “interconnectedness of the world, by way of interactions, exchanges and related developments, affecting not least the organization of culture.”⁷⁰ Here I will describe how connections and relationships between people spanning several places enable and are fundamentally necessary for cultural-educational tourism trips, with the one I participated in as a primary example.

Most of the people who were a part of the trip I took, as students or teachers or otherwise, were interconnected mainly by what I will call geographical and social commonalities. That is, they were often there because of a relationship or a connection with another person involved, and that relationship was based on shared geography or shared social sites or both. I further break this down into a set of ways people were connected within these two commonalities. Regarding geography I describe relationships in terms of neighbourhood or local community, nation, and transnational connections. Regarding social sites I describe relationships in terms of shared workplace, shared study space, kinship, and shared interests or activities.

⁶⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” 51.

⁷⁰ Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (London: Routledge, 1996), 7.

Geography

Some of the people I encountered on this trip were connected by their hometown or neighbourhood, or by their current city of residence. Not all of these connections ran parallel to relationships, and I describe these as indirect connections. They were often discovered in retrospect. However, in the case of three Swedish participants, their geographical closeness as neighbours was also cause for social relationship, a direct connection. One of the three had heard about the trip to Ghana and invited her two neighbours, a mother and daughter, to go with her. Other participants from the Stockholm area were indirectly connected geographically, simply by the fact of their living in the same city and a few of these were directly connected in terms of shared social sites.

The same could be said for participants on a national level. The Swedish participants were a group from a variety of different cities across the country. Several were directly connected locally, others directly connected via social relationships, but most of us could be considered to have an indirect national connection simply by the fact of our living in Sweden. A parallel relationship structure was evident also for the German and Norwegian students we met. Many of the students didn't have a social connection to each other, but were nonetheless connected geographically in their belonging to the same nation-state.

Most of the geographical connections that I would consider transnational were performed by teachers, although some students had travelled previously to Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria or other West African countries. I feel it is more appropriate to consider the teachers' connections in this category, as many of them live or lived and work or worked in both Ghana and a European country. They had and have a network of connections within both places based on social relationships as well as geography. Our dance teacher, for example, is from the same village in Ghana as our drum teacher, but now lives and works in Germany for a large part of the year, while at the same time returning to Ghana for both work and 'pleasure.' The founder of Odehe Center where our dance classes were held is also from Ghana, but lives and works in Germany. Another of the teachers from Ghana now lives and works in Norway, and Kristina – who lives and works in Sweden – has lived, worked and studied in Ghana. Their transnational lives have had a trickle-down effect on people within their network of connections, and has resulted in the possibility for cultural exchange and travel, which in this case was manifested in a musical education trip.

Social Sites

Shared social sites gave rise to direct connections and relationships more frequently. There are certainly more possibilities for shared social sites than those I consider here, but I found these to be the most common among the participants on this trip: a shared workplace, a shared study or educational space, shared kinship, and shared interests or activities.

Several of the Swedish students had direct connections based on shared study space. One student attended Kungliga Musikhögskolan (the Royal College of Music) with Kristina, and two other Swedish students had travelled to Ghana for fieldwork as part of their studies at Uppsala University. Their partners had in turn travelled to visit them and they all took part in the drumming and dancing classes.

Within the Swedish group of travellers there were three sets of us who travelled with partners and two sets of us who were related as parent and child.

The drum and dance teachers were connected on our trip through a common workplace although their relationship to each other generally started out on different terms. Their workplace was in turn the students' educational and activity space.

Most of the student participants had a connection to either Kristina or one of the other teachers in Europe as a result of the teacher's activities in drum or dance classes, workshops and performances. All of the students, as a result of their participation in the drum and dance classes in Ghana formed connections as a result of a shared activity, although not all of these connections resulted in friendship or other types of relationships. Many remained acquaintances.

The following image is a representation of the relationships and connections among people that were involved in the trip I took to Ghana. In the first image, I have chosen to show relationships between the Swedish students and Kristina, since I spent more time with them and have chosen on a broader level to focus on Sweden's connection to West Africa. I have chosen to not label them by name for their own privacy's sake. In the second image I show Kristina's relationship with other teachers and also the German and Norwegian participants' relationship with their teachers.

Image 2.1: Social and Geographical Connections Between Swedish Participants

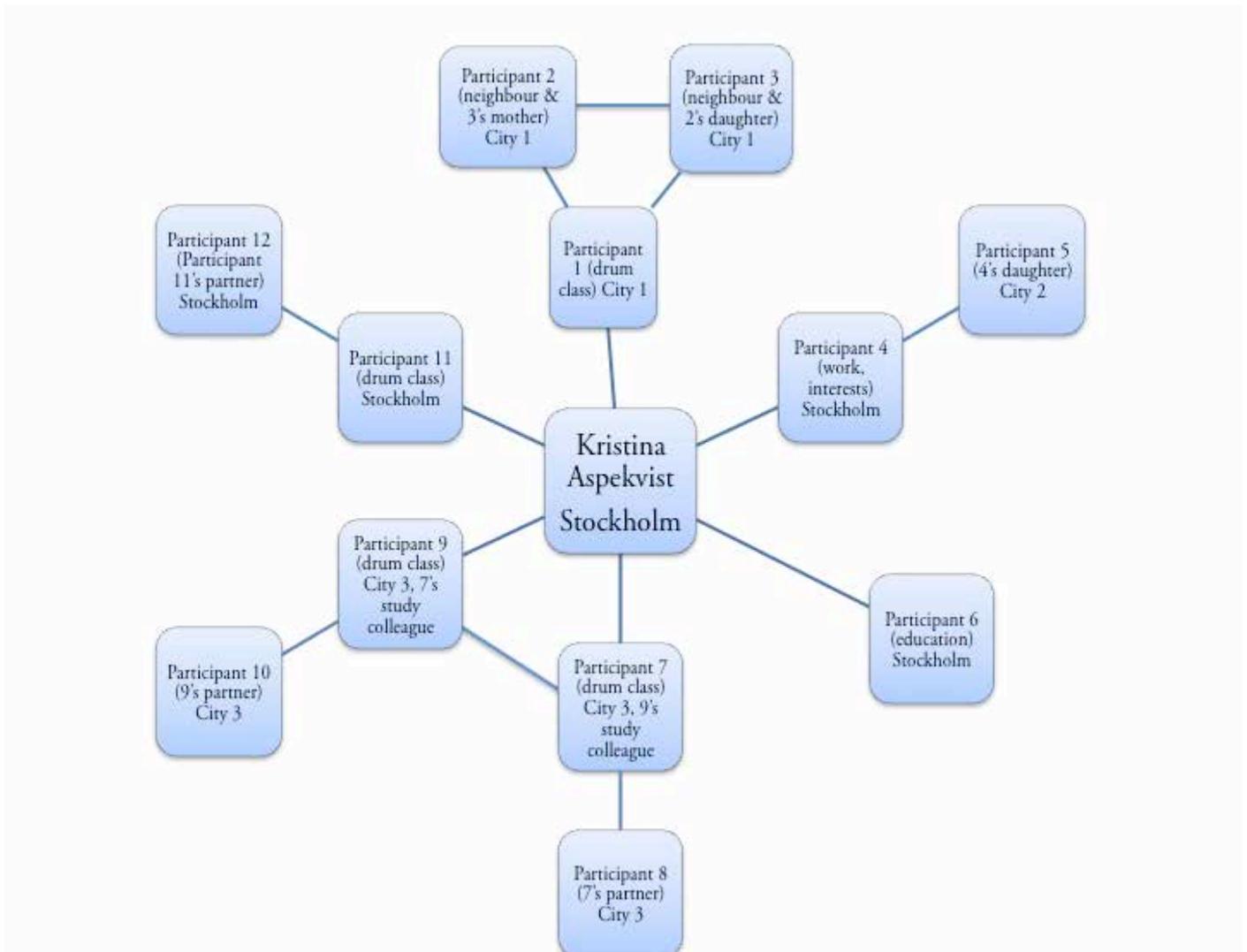
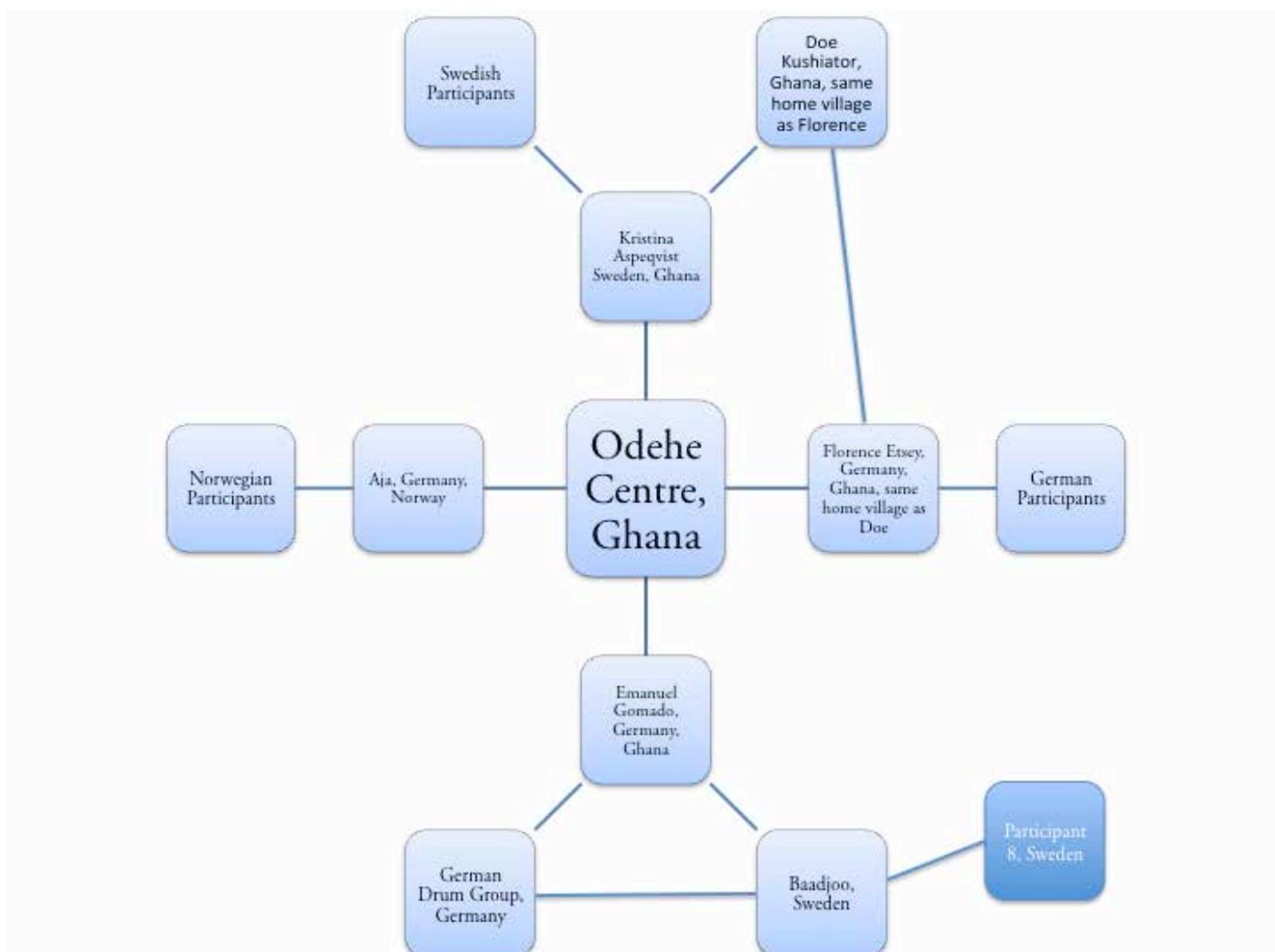


Image 2.2 *Social and Geographical Connections Between Teachers and Other Participants*



The interconnectedness of people and places as described here is perhaps the most necessary aspect of enabling musical educational trips to Ghana from Sweden, but the participants' own notions and curiosity about the Ghanaian cultural other, and their economic ability to participate in its consumption are as intertwined with and influential as that interconnectedness.

The Social Learning Musicking Body

Who travels, to where, and why often define similarities and differences between the traveller and those at the destination. The relationship may appear imbalanced in some ways, but an exchange occurs on some level, whether it is economic or intellectual or otherwise. An inevitable aspect of travel to new places and trying new things is coming to terms with the unfamiliar and forging connections in spite of it. In this section I will describe how the body encounters an unfamiliar music.

Learning to do new music can involve several stages or layers of experience: the meeting between the known and the new, the perception of and acquisition of new skills, and social interaction with teachers, other students and musicians.

I have divided this chapter into three sections. The first, Meeting The New, deals with what happens phenomenally when the body encounters unknown music. The second, Perception and Acquisition of the Beat is an expansion on this, and describes both what our bodies had to do to acquire Ewe music, and also how the body fits into the music itself as it does music from various positions – by making musical sounds or moving the body with the music. The third, The Social, expands upon how the body fits into the music to include social interactions, different roles in the act of musicking and the inherent sociality of musicking.

Meeting The New

As I've mentioned earlier, in meeting a new music the senses are presented with a new range of experiences. The ears not only hear unfamiliar sounds but the entire body perceives a whole new reality of being in music and musical context, which may require and inspire physical adaptation to the new musical reality.

Meeting the new in and of itself implies a process of comparison and contrast with what is familiar and different. The expectations of what will be heard, or as Anne Danielsen called it, 'habitual expectations of the listeners/dancers,'⁷¹ colour the listener's experience of the music. Musics can be experienced as music because the listener can draw upon previous experiences of music as reference points for what is happening in the present. That is, the listener has learned that sound organized in certain ways falls into a category which is commonly called 'music,' and furthermore, that certain ways of organizing sound belong to sub-categories, or genres of music. The listener has a kind of musical habitus to draw on, a kind of learned rule or structure set that guides their listening and musicking behaviour. New, unfamiliar music challenges the musical habitus and is simultaneously received through its lens. The listener's expectations at any particular moment also play a role. A listener expecting a pop song like The Beatles' *Love Me Do* may experience a tune with a repetitive groove like Skrillex's *Scary Monsters And Nice Sprites* as dragging out in time, boring, or going nowhere. Or, a listener expecting a piano sonata may experience polyrhythmic Ewe music as noisy and formless. The traditional Western musical habitus is generally attuned to melodic, harmonic music – whose beat is often emphasized or

⁷¹ Anne Danielsen, *Presence and Pleasure: The Funk Grooves of James Brown and Parliament* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2006), 147.

easy to distinguish, and which has a predetermined structure or form – than to rhythmically complex music in which the beat is never uttered, but implied, and whose form is characterized by repetition and groove, and often open-ended or of an undefined or undetermined length.

The musical habitus encompasses not just what the listener hears, but how they approach music and how they listen. The traditional Western body is used to listening to music in what seems to be a passive way, restricting dancing or active participation in musicking to specific places and times. The body however, is not as passive as it seems, as Teppo Särkämö's has observed.⁷² In fact the 'passive' listening to music is often also restricted to specific places and times, as is evidenced at least in Sweden by the relative lack of constant musical sounds in public space such as streets or public parks (I exclude places such as shops, cafés and malls from the term public space, although the public arguably occupies these spaces on a regular basis). At the same time as this absence of musical sound occupies the public space, the individual has with the help of current technology brought private listening to the public space. In other words, individuals occupy public spaces while listening to private soundtracks without the obligation to participate in the aural soundscape that is outside of their headphones. In this context, music and our experiencing of it is highly restricted and personalized, rather than a shared public experience (Unless of course you live close to an arena which plays host to live concerts that invade your private sound space).

This could not contrast more with what we met in Accra and Teshi-Nungua. The rarity there was silence, and almost no one walked around with headphones. Music constantly filled public spaces via radios and stereo systems from homes, shops, passing cars, passing people, etc. Azonto and Reggae rhythms filled the air, and when the power went out, the first thing people used their generators for was to turn on the music. People weren't constantly dancing in the streets, but there was a constant shared listening experience regardless of what people were doing. And no one seemed to be bothered by it. No one complained that their neighbour's music was too loud or that they didn't like that song or their space was being invaded by the sound as one might have done in Sweden. The experience of constant musical sound in public spaces was one of the first markers of difference in our meeting the new musical habitus.

Here I choose to distinguish between listening to music and musicking. Listening is an integral part of musicking, and can inspire subsequent full-body participation, but musicking in the sense I intend involves the body's limbs in an active, deliberate, external expression that listening

⁷² Teppo Särkämö, "Music perception and cognition."

doesn't always do. Listening does engage similar parts of the brain as active musicking, but the difference is that active musicking involves activation participation of the whole body as an external expression of the interior experience. Musicking engages the cognitive act of perception in both hearing and perceiving, but also in activating the body to move in specific ways to produce specific sounds and movements.

Perception & Acquisition of the Beat

To be able to get into music, new or familiar, one needs to hear it and form some kind of understanding of how it works. The body must learn to feel the beat and form a sense of inner time, which also includes the off-beat and the underlying pulse. This is a process that occurs both consciously and non-consciously and is both muscular and perceptual. Once a sense of inner time has been established, the body can then move on to expressing this feeling externally, in what Ruth Stone (and Alfred Schutz before her) would call 'outer time'.⁷³ Outer time is something that can be observed and measured by others according to Schutz, and according to Stone, "from the African perspective outer time is that time through which action is coordinated." A musicking body is an observable object by which other bodies can establish a feeling of time within their stream of consciousness.

Once the body has acquired the feeling of time in West African music, the next step is to formulate an appropriate external response, a demonstration of outer time. A shift in focus must take place to what the body does in response to its sensing of the beat. There is a conscious effort to urge the body to respond a certain way, and within this effort, the body becomes the object of itself as a subject. Also, rather than acting upon hearing the beat, as one might do in Western music, the body must learn to act in anticipation of the beat, on the off-beat, in preparation of the beat. This learning process is a back-and-forth of feeling and experiencing the beat and in turn objectifying the body in a process of willing it to do and be in anticipation of the beat.

Additionally the body must then learn to stop objectifying itself by consciously trying to control its movements in response to what it hears and learn to let itself be the subject and in the present time in the music, responding with a whole body action (feeling and being in the music simultaneously) rather than subject-object cerebral one oriented around a thought process like, 'I hear this and must respond by doing this or moving that. Now body, move!' The transformation

⁷³ Ruth Stone, "In Search of Time in African Music," 146.

from a subject-object approach to musicking to a subject-feeling-being approach is not an easy one, and takes time and practice.

For many of the participants in my fieldwork in Ghana finding a pulse, or “the beat,” within the unfamiliar complex rhythmic structure of the music, and establishing that sense of inner time was in itself a challenge. This applied both to learning the dances and the drum parts. While learning to dance, we were provided with aural cues in the form of the sound of the drums and visual cues in the form of our dance teacher and teaching assistants who danced with us as we learned. This meant that if we couldn’t find the beat from the aural cues (and establish inner time), we were provided with other bodies to watch, who themselves were moving to the beat (outer time), thus providing a visual cue of the beat. We didn’t have the same visual cues for our drum lessons, and had to rely more on aural cues, and subtle signals that our teacher provided. Those few whose inner time had a weaker sense of the beat had a harder time making their outer time match: their movements in the dance didn’t quite “fit”, and their drumming was often “off” from the rest of the group, occasionally causing confusion and throwing off other participants.

The pedagogical style of the teachers reflected a focus on hearing and feeling the beat, a more subject-feeling-being approach. Rather than explaining what sounds to expect or where the beat was, or what your body should do at a specific time in response to specific sounds (a more subject-object oriented approach), we were expected to learn through by acquiring the feel through mimicry. Our teachers demonstrated and we tried to copy what they were doing and to get our inner sense of time to jive with what our perception of theirs was. Our dance teacher also focused on teaching us to anticipate the beat with our movements. She repeatedly instructed us, “The dance always starts on four,” reminding us to feel it: “It has to come from the inside first, then it can be on the outside too.”⁷⁴ In other words, you need a sense of inner time in order to be able to express outer time. Here she is reminding us to feel the beat in reference to the movement on beat 4 which anticipates beat 1, but she also stressed the importance of off-beat preparations: “There is no beat without an off-beat...the off-beat comes first.” This was an effort to help us to understand the starting point of our body’s movement was not the beat itself, but the preparatory movement before the beat, on the off-beat. We did one particular rhythm exercise using our feet and our hands holding sticks to practice the beat and the off-beat. We alternated stomping and hitting sticks together on the beat with stomping on-beat and hitting sticks together off-beat, first without a bell rhythm, then with. This exercise along with much repetition of hearing and doing helped us participants to shift from a subject-object approach to

⁷⁴ Florence Etsey, during dance lessons, January 3, 2014. Field notes, my personal collection.

a subject-feeling-being approach to the music. We started off finding a sense of inner time, and objectifying our bodies to move like our teachers, willing them to learn to move in new ways: moving our chests in and out to the beat, stepping, hopping, turning, clapping, 'gathering' and 'harvesting' with our arms, etc. After much repetition of these movements, we were able to let our bodies feel, be and do in the music.

The following example is a transcription of this exercise. The first two transcriptions show the hands and feet doing on and off-beats in relation to the gangkogui bell pattern of the Fanti Sikchyi style, and the second two transcriptions show the same movements in relation to the gangkogui pattern of the Ewe Gahu style. Audio examples demonstrate these transcriptions.

Example 1. *Practicing hearing and doing the beat and the off-beat. A transcription of a pedagogical exercise, here with two different gangkogui rhythms.*

Sikchyi Rhythm, both hands and feet on-beat. Listen to Example 1 Audio: Sikchyi Beat Exercise.

Feet Stomps

Hands - Stick Hits

Gangkogui Sikchyi

Sikchyi Rhythm, feet on beat, hands off-beat. Listen to Example 1 Audio: Sikchyi Beat Exercise.

Feet Stomps

Hands - Stick Hits

Gangkogui Sikchyi

Gahu Rhythm, both feet and hands on-beat. Listen to Example 1 Audio: Gahu Beat Exercise.

Gahu Rhythm, feet on beat, hands on off-beat. Listen to Example 1 Audio: Gahu Beat Exercise.

From the body's original musical habitus, it had to learn to hear polyrhythmic Ewe music as music, and hear the beat within that music, establishing the feeling of the beat internally. In order to participate in the music, the body also had to learn to do the beat externally. This process began with establishing a sense of inner time via hearing and perceiving. From there, the body had to enact its understanding of the beat and the off-beat through movement, initially acting as a subject willing itself as an object to do, and later by allowing itself to simply be in its own act of musicking.

The acquisition of the beat is essential to both dance and drumming. Often, where the drums do not sound the beat, the body of the dancer does. Many of the basic dance movements perform the beat in interaction with the sound produced by the drums. As Gerhard Kubik and others before and after him pointed out, there is a “need to consider rhythm as consisting of not only acoustic but motor and visual elements as well.”⁷⁵ The body has a specific place in time with Ewe music and plays a specific role in the rhythm and the sense of time.

In the following example I have notated the rhythms of the body movements in a 4-beat choreography to Agbadza style to illustrate how the body participates in the overall rhythm by

⁷⁵ Ruth Stone, “In Search of Time in African Music,” 143.

providing the beat. The body's movements all fall on the beat, with the exception of preparatory movements such as the chest inward movement (notated here), the lifting of the foot in anticipation of the hop on beat four of the measure and the movement of the arm away from the wave towards the clap, also on beat 4 (these two movements are not notated). The drum parts mainly emphasize an underlying pulse of eighth notes, with the exception occurring in the Gangkogui's low bell on the first beat of the measure, and in this transcription, Drum 2's hit on beat 1 using a different hit to generate a different sound and thus distinguishing beat 1 from the following eighth notes. On the level of the measure, beat 4 is emphasized in anticipation of beat 1 as follows: the Gangkogui hits the high bell on beat 4, the only other beat in the measure aside from beat 1 to get a hit on-beat; the Lead Drum hits on the last eighth note of the measure prior to beat 1 of the following; the body both claps and hops on beat 4, emphasizing the return to beat 1 additionally by switching to the hand/foot which moves on beats 1-3. See both the transcription below and the accompanying video.

Example 2: *The body's movements in anticipation of and confirmation of the beat.* (Watch Example 2 video)

The image displays a musical score for a 12/8 time signature, consisting of ten staves. The staves are labeled as follows from top to bottom: Gangkogui, Kagan, Drums 1, Drums 2, Master Drum Signal, Chest Movement (Top-forward, Bottom-Backward), Clap, Wave (switch hands after clap), Hop, and Step opposite foot. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests, with some notes marked with a 'y' symbol. The score is divided into two measures, each ending with a double bar line and repeat dots. The time signature is indicated as 12/8 at the beginning of each staff.

The beat and various rhythms in Ewe music and other West African musics can in some styles be felt in more than one way, and the body's place in the music often reflects this. I have two illustrations of this. The first is from an exercise Kristina taught in her group drum class in Stockholm. We did this exercise without a bell rhythm. We first learned two drum rhythms using added mnemonic phrases, steps and claps as a learning aid. Once confident with the rhythms, we were encouraged to switch between the two at our leisure, so that some of the group were playing the first and others the second simultaneously. Before the switch, and while we still played each rhythm in unison, many of us – myself included - experienced the rhythms as different and the placement of the beat as different (see examples 3.1 and 3.2). Upon switching, it became clear that we were all in fact playing the same rhythm, but experiencing it differently, as our perception of the beat, and the rhythm in relation to the beat, was different (see example 3.3).

The rhythm with the mnemonic phrase *Äppelkaka* was experienced as having a 3/4 beat, and the rhythm with the mnemonic phrase *Äppelartellett* was experienced as having a 6/8 beat. When playing the *Äppelkaka* rhythm over the 6/8 beat or the *Äppelartellett* rhythm over the 3/4 beat, the rhythms felt syncopated.

The following example is a transcription of this rhythm with the two ways of experiencing the beat. The first shows the rhythm with the *Äppelkaka*, or 3/4 beat. The second shows the rhythm with the *Äppelartellett*, or 6/8 beat, and the third shows the rhythm over both beats.

Example 3: *Feeling the same rhythm in two different ways.*

3.1 *Äppelkaka, feeling in 3/4*

The diagram shows two horizontal lines representing musical notation. The top line is labeled 'Drum' and has a 3/4 time signature. It contains a sequence of notes: a quarter note labeled 'Ä', followed by a dotted quarter note labeled 'ppel', followed by a dotted quarter note labeled 'ka', and finally another quarter note labeled 'ka'. A horizontal line connects the two 'ka' notes, indicating they are part of a single rhythmic unit. The bottom line is labeled 'Beat' and also has a 3/4 time signature. It shows three vertical tick marks representing the beats, with the first tick mark aligned with the 'Ä' note, the second with the 'ppel' note, and the third with the first 'ka' note.

3.2 Äppeltartelett, feeling in 6/8

Drum $\text{H } \frac{6}{8}$ Ä - ppel - tar - te - lett (clap)

Beat $\text{H } \frac{6}{8}$ x

3.3 Both rhythms at the same time

Äppeltartelett $\text{H } \frac{6}{8}$ Ä - ppel - tar - te - lett (clap)

Äppelkaka $\text{H } \frac{6}{8}$ Ä - ppel - ka - ka

6/8 feel $\text{H } \frac{6}{8}$ x

3/4 feel $\text{H } \frac{6}{8}$ x

This example showed how one rhythm can have a beat that is felt in two ways, but polyrhythmic textures also give rise to more than one way of feeling the beat, and consequently, more than one way for the body to fit into the music. In Agbekor style, the beat can be experienced as a 12/8 measure divided into 4 or 6 beats or a hemiola of 3+2 beats (2+2+2+3+3), and this is reflected in how the dancers move both during the basic step, the turnaround, and the variations. Certain drum parts also emphasize different beat divisions within the rhythms themselves or with various techniques, including using different hits that produce different pitch and timbre within the drum's rhythm.

In the next example, I have transcribed the gangkogui and the three different beats, based on the Agbekor I learned in Canada. The example that follows is a transcription of all the drum parts plus the three different beats. Audio examples illustrate the transcribed rhythms.

In example 4.2 you can see how the drums complement two different beats: the Kagan and Kidi work with the 4 beat pattern, and the Totogi and Kloboto work with the 3+2 beat pattern. The Kagan is in eternal anticipation of the beat and the absence of a hit on the beat seems to

emphasize the experiencing of the missing beat. The Kidi's steady pattern of eighth notes is offset from the beat by one eighth as a result of its shifting pitch and timbre, and although it strikes the drum on the beat, the pattern's delay by one eighth note also creates anticipation of the beat. The Totogi and Kloboto have a pattern that builds up to the one, starting on the second half of the 3+2 measure with press hits on the seventh and tenth eighth note of the measure, and culminating with the press hit on beat 1. Kloboto's pattern is essentially an embellishment of Totogi's, with bounce and press hits occurring in the same place. Totogi's first three hits on quarter notes (and Kloboto's version of the same) also lend to the experiencing of the 3+2 beat. It is also important to note that the pitch and timbre of the drum produced by different hits is as important to the pattern as the rhythm played and can significantly change the way the rhythm is heard and experienced.

Example 4 *Agbekor gangkogui and supporting drums. Listen to Example 4 audio.*

Example 4.1 *Agbekor gangkogui rhythm with 3 different ways of feeling the beat. Listen to Example 4.1 audio.*

The image displays musical notation for the Agbekor gangkogui rhythm in 12/8 time. It consists of four staves:

- Gangkogui:** A melody line with a treble clef and a 12/8 time signature. It features seven eighth notes: a quarter note on the first beat, followed by eighth notes on the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh beats.
- 4 Beat:** A drum pattern with a treble clef and a 12/8 time signature. It shows four quarter notes (represented by 'x' marks) on the first, third, fifth, and seventh beats.
- 6 Beat:** A drum pattern with a treble clef and a 12/8 time signature. It shows six quarter notes (represented by 'x' marks) on the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth beats.
- 3+2 Beat:** A drum pattern with a treble clef and a 12/8 time signature. It shows six quarter notes (represented by 'x' marks) on the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth beats, illustrating the 3+2 feel.

Example 4.2 *Transcription of Agbekor drum rhythms with 3 different ways of feeling the beat.*

The image displays ten staves of musical notation for Agbekor drum rhythms, all in 12/8 time. The staves are labeled as follows from top to bottom:

- Gangkogui:** Features a sequence of notes with 'High' and 'Low' labels.
- 4 Beat:** Represented by four 'x' marks on a staff, indicating a 4-beat feel.
- 6 Beat:** Represented by six 'x' marks on a staff, indicating a 6-beat feel.
- 3+2 Beat:** Represented by six 'x' marks on a staff, indicating a 3+2 beat feel.
- Axatse:** Features a sequence of notes with 'Hand' and 'Thigh' labels.
- Kagan:** Features a sequence of notes with a 'y' mark at the start of each measure.
- Kagan Variation:** Features a sequence of notes with a 'y' mark at the start of each measure.
- Kidi:** Features a sequence of notes with 'Bounce' and 'Press' labels.
- Totogi:** Features a sequence of notes with 'Press' and 'Bounce' labels.
- Kloboto:** Features a sequence of notes with 'Press' and 'Bounce' labels.

So which version of the beat do the dancers feel? Well, they feel both the 4-beat and the 3+2-beat versions, and the movements of the dance reflect this. The basic movement uses the 3+2-beat feel and the turnaround movement, which occurs at the end of every variation, uses a 4-beat feel, with the exception of the very end, in which the last measure seems to be a 2+3-beat feel (3+3+2+2+2). Rather than remaining fixed to one version of the beat in their inner time, the dancers are flexible and alternate between several, demonstrating an interaction with the multiple outer times played by the drummers and their own multiple interwoven inner times.

In example 4.3, I have transcribed how the dancer's movements fit in with the music in Agbekor style. This example shows the drums' rhythms, the rhythm of the body's feet, the rhythm of the body's arms, and the rhythm of the body's chest movements. The transcription shows the basic

movement of Agbekor dance. I have also included accompanying videos of me performing both the basic movement and the turnaround, and links to videos of Agbekor performances as recorded in Ghana.

In Example 4.4, the lead drum rhythm and the dancers' movements in the dance's turnaround, which takes place at the end of the variations and functions as a transition back into the basic movement, not only emphasize the beat, but the placement of their movements and drum hits anticipate beat 1 of the next measure. If you break the larger 4-measure phrase into shorter figures, each one begins on beat 3 and ends on the following beat 1, with the exception of the last figure, which could either be seen as starting on beat 2 or beat 4 and leading back to the basic movement on the following beat 1. This is also an example of the emphasis our teachers placed on anticipating the beat, and particularly the anticipation of beat 1.

Example 4.3 *Agbekor drums and the basic movement, transcription on next page.* (See also Example video 4.3 – Agbekor basic movement, and the following YouTube videos:

“traditional dance atsiagbekor” <http://youtu.be/ti5kbhMNDyo?t=50s>⁷⁶ from 0:50-1:10. The basic movement starts at 0:54.

“Slow Agbekor at the Dagbe Center of Kopeyia, Ghana”

<http://youtu.be/uU1FLIS6xLY?t=2m25s>⁷⁷ from 2:25-3:27. At the beginning of this video excerpt the dancers do the basic movement, from 2:25. The lead drummer gives a signal for the variation at 2:40 and the dancers respond at 2:43. The variation continues until 3:12 when the lead drummer and dancers finish the variation with the turnaround. The lead drummer's rhythm parallels the dancer's movements in the turnaround. They return to the basic movement at 3:22.

⁷⁶ Joseph Dzikunu and Tegbi Talent Cultural Troupe, “traditional dance atsiagbekor,” YouTube video, 6:26, posted by “George Akpalu,” July 15, 2008, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ti5kbhMNDyo>.

⁷⁷ Emmanuel Agbeli and Dagbe Center, “Slow Agbekor at the Dagbe Center of Kopeyia, Ghana,” YouTube video, 5:06, posted by “JossieWossie,” February 12, 2012, accessed July 30, 2014, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uU1FLIS6xLY>.

Gangkongui $\frac{12}{8}$ High
 Low

Axaise $\frac{12}{8}$ High
 Hand
 Thigh

Kagan $\frac{12}{8}$ High
 Thigh

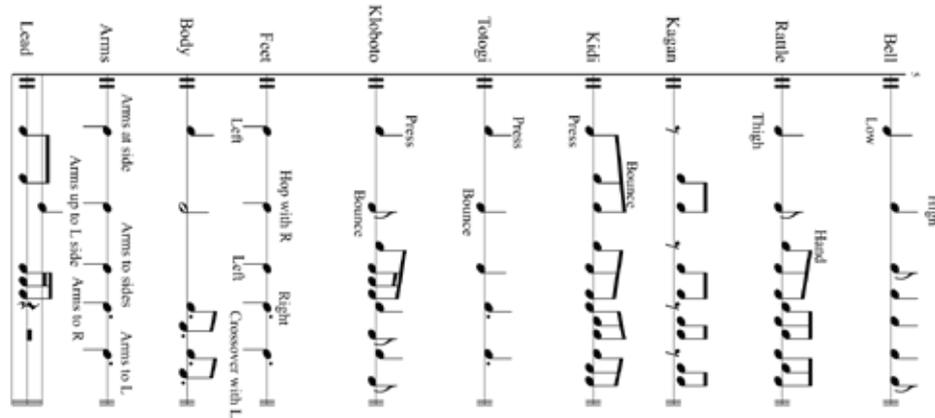
Kidi $\frac{12}{8}$ High
 Press
 Bounce

Tologji $\frac{12}{8}$ High
 Press
 Bounce

Kloboko $\frac{12}{8}$ High
 Press
 Bounce

Footsteps Sideways motion $\frac{12}{8}$ High
 Left
 Hop with Right
 Left
 Right
 Crossover with L
 Right
 Hop with Left
 Right
 Left
 Crossover with Right

Body Movement High - Chest Out Low - Chest In $\frac{12}{8}$ High
 Arms at side
 Arms up to L side
 Arms to sides
 Arms to R
 Arms to L
 Arms at side
 Arms up to R side
 Arms to sides
 Arms to L
 Arms to R



The necessity of feeling the beat in order to do the dance and make it fit has been shown above, but it is also an integral part of learning a new drum rhythm – making musical sounds. I learned two drum styles in group lessons in Ghana, and one in individual lessons. In the group lessons, we started with Agbadza style, which I had previously danced but not drummed in Canada, although I had forgotten almost completely. We students also had the great privilege of participating in a Blekete Ceremony in nearby Tema where we were invited to dance Agbadza with our hosts. During our drum lessons we learned a series of Agbadza rhythms on their own, without a bell rhythm or other potential contextual clues that could have aided in the acquisition of the beat. Some of us were able to feel a beat (or at least what we thought the beat was), but it seemed as though some experienced the rhythms merely as a series of longer and shorter hits with longer and shorter pauses in between, without any real sense of inner time. There seemed to be a parallel non-conscious process of attempting to recognize a pulse in a rhythm, while we consciously tried to reproduce that rhythm. The result was rather cacophonous, as you can hear in audio example number 5.

When we learned the Gahu lead drum rhythms we had a similar experience, at least initially. We learned the lead drum as a set of rhythms on its own at first, and after a number of lessons we learned the supporting drum parts as well, and started putting them together. Once we started playing the different rhythms together, the beat became clearer to more of us, and we were able to play together – that is, each playing his or her own rhythm with the same, or nearly the same, inner concept of the beat in time, resulting in fleeting moments of feeling the rhythms fit together, a feeling of groove. In this setting we participants experienced varying degrees of change from subject-object to subject-feeling-being musicking. The subject-object stage involved learning to interact with drums we were unfamiliar with in a manner we were unfamiliar with playing rhythms we were unfamiliar with. We objectified our hands to get them to hold the sticks

in a certain way, and hit the drum's skin in a certain way, while simultaneously posturing our bodies on uncomfortable chairs in the sand to accommodate the drum and fit it into our physical space. Once we were acclimatized to the drums and sticks we further objectified our hands to get them to hit the drum in a particular pattern and with particular hits. But, here again we were encouraged to "turn off your brain, you have to feel it in your body,"⁷⁸ and transition to feeling and being, rather than making ourselves do. The more lessons that passed, and the more we had repeated and played the rhythms, the less we objectified ourselves, and the more we felt how the rhythms fit with the beat and each other.

Learning how the dance fits with the music, and how the rhythms fit with each other to create the music are fundamental aspects of doing Ewe music. Ewe music is not merely drumming, it is dancing, and participating through observation. In the next section I will elaborate on the social aspect of musicking.

The Social

The nature of polyrhythmic Ewe music implies and requires interaction and participation of many individuals. There are in my experience sound-producers, dancer-beat-confirmers and observer-participants. Interactions occur within these groups and between these groups. The groups are of my own construction, and it is possible and not uncommon for one individual to cross back and forth between the groups.

Sound-producers are those who use drums, bells and other means, such as song, to produce the sound object through which dancer-beat-confirmers and observer-participants can engage in music and interact with it and one another. The sound object may be comprised of many different rhythms which interact with and complement one another, as we have seen in Example 4's Agbekor. The music can lack something or sound incomplete when a sounded rhythm is missing, though it is still possible to play and dancers and observers are still able to participate in such instances.

Dancer-beat-confirmers are those participants who actively physically engage with the sound objects by dancing, and by doing so add rhythm to the sound object in the form of particular body movements, and/or participation in song. On another level, however, the dancers also interact with the drummers and observer-participants in a form of body language that isn't necessarily part of the dance. By this I mean facial expressions, general posture and non-verbal

⁷⁸ Doe Kushiator, during drum lessons, December 31, 2013. Field notes, my personal collection.

communicative interactions. A dancer who is extremely dedicated to and involved in the music can inspire a feeling of connectedness and intensity within the drummers and observers, and change the event's mood. The same could also be said for particularly inspired drummers or observer-participants.

Observer-participants are those who are involved in the musicking event, not necessarily as drummers or dancers, but on the periphery of the event, often moving, clapping or hitting sticks to the beat and singing in response to the lead singer. The observer interacts with and produces the sound object simultaneously, and interacts with the drummers and dancers on a more non-verbal level. The participation of the observers and their level of enthusiasm and engagement can influence the feeling of the event in a similar fashion to the dancers'. They are also interacting with their neighbour observer-participants, and sometimes tending to the needs of drummers and dancers. Observer-participants don't seem to be silent receivers, but vocal and active contributors to the overall setting.

The multitude of possible ways a person can participate in West African polyrhythmic musicking means that there is a constant flux in interactions between people and sound, and the result is that no two musicking events are ever the same, nor are two styles ever performed in the same way twice, even if the same drummers, dancers and observers are present. The body's participation in the rhythm creates a sense of time that can be "viewed as many elements moving together, a more mosaic and interrelated approach."⁷⁹ Of course there is an interaction between people and sound that leads to unique performances of the same piece in Western music as well, but West African polyrhythmic music is often much more flexible in form as a result of its dependence on the social interactions of the people involved in the musicking event. The motoric action of the body is itself part of the music, and integral aspect of it.

The interaction and interrelations that are necessary among participants in Ewe music make possible the production of sound and sound objects, which together with dance and body movement produce a rhythm. For us participants, learning this aspect of Ewe musical habitus was as an important part of meeting the new and integrating it into our own musical library as was learning to hear the beat, establishing a sense of inner time, and then transferring that into action in a process of objectifying our own bodies until they had acquired the knowledge enabling them to be and feel in the music.

⁷⁹ Ruth Stone, "In Search of Time in African Music," 143.

Conclusions & Summary

From a Discourse of the Exotic to an Embodiment of New Musical Habitus

There is still a discourse of difference about African musics. The discourse has developed over centuries and was particularly shaped by colonial and political strategies, what we know now to be false descriptions from the scientific community, and missionary, aid and development organizations. The history I described in chapter three is a small window into Sweden's participation in and contribution to this discourse. Although Sweden was by no means the most dominant player on the scene during colonial times the impact of the work of the influential Carl Linnaeus should not be underestimated in the justification of and propagation of the discourse of difference inside and outside of Sweden. The practice of speaking about Africa and Africans in a certain way is learned, as is the types of language used within that practice. It too is a part of one's habitus, as was reflected by the participants in my case study in the words they used to describe their motivations for travel.

This discourse still emphasizes and exoticizes African musics in relation to Western musics, but exposure and access to them has both sparked curiosity about the unknown, and an embodied experience of the musics that attracted the participants. Their experience was that yes, there is something exotic and other about 'African Music', but that it is something positive and worth spending time, money, and significant physical and mental effort on, as they all did on the trip to Ghana described in *The Travelling Musicking Body* in chapter four. The trip in and of itself was an act of differentiation economically and in terms of the modes of cultural consumption and acquisition that occurred. The point of the trip for the participants, however, was not to emphasize socio-economical difference, but to engage with and meet that difference with the objective of learning and acquiring new embodied knowledge in the form of both the cultural practices that were learned and also in all other aspects of interacting with new people and places. Rather than approaching Ghana and its cultural practices from a top-down devaluative perspective, as was common historically among explorers and missionaries, etc., the participants both met these cultural practices with a sense of respect and value, which both enabled a more equitable cultural exchange and the possibility of a hybridization between their own and the new cultural-musical habitus

Interaction between bodies, and between bodies and objects are the foundation of acquiring new embodied knowledge and of the act of musicking. First contact with the new can be both stimulating and jarring. As I discussed in *The Social Learning Musicking Body* in chapter four, there

is a process of comparison and contrast that initially occurs, during which the participants from their own habitus perceive and process new sights, sounds, smells and aesthetics as a means of coming to terms with them and forming a starting point from which they could learn or acquire them. In terms of music, the body learns to feel a sense of time in the new music. The process of acquiring a sense of time involves both conscious and non-conscious acts of perception of that which seems external and comparisons with the familiar and remembered. The body can form its own sense of inner time by interacting with other bodies that are in turn musicking, and by doing so expressing their own sense of inner time externally. In some cases, as in the dance lessons we took in Ghana, there are both sound objects and other bodies to interact with aurally and visually, but in others, as in the drum lessons, we were only able to engage aurally as a means of establishing inner time. In both cases the body needed to repeatedly be a part of the new music, hearing and observing, in order to acquire a sense of time in the music.

An additional layer to acquiring new embodied knowledge is the physical act of perceiving and practicing. The body not only had to acquire a sense of time, but to learn how to move and act in an appropriate way within that sense of time. In the initial stages of this process, the body seems to objectify itself, with consciously acting as a subject telling the itself – its own limbs – how and when to move in response to the both conscious and non-conscious act of processing the sound objects. Here again, the participants' bodies had to learn a new practice in terms of learning new ways of moving the body in dance. The body movement, or chest movements in and out, was perhaps the most unfamiliar movement we encountered, and required the most conscious effort to do it properly. Repetition of the movements resulted in a physical memory that allowed the consciousness to engage less with the body itself, and more with the happenings and interactions with other bodies and objects. At this stage the body could both be in and feel the music.

Prerequisites for experiencing how the body fits into music were precisely those I just mentioned above: the body must meet the new music and in hearing and observing find a sense of time within the music; the body must also learn new ways of moving to the new music, and in the process go from objectifying itself as a means of learning to move, and after repetition, learn to be in (doing) and feel (hearing) the music. There were many parallel ways to feel time in the rhythms we learned in Ghana, and this was reflected in the way the sound fit together with the body movements. The sounded rhythms produced by bodies drumming, playing instruments and singing were polyrhythmic in texture and anticipated the beat, in particular beat 1, but rarely sounded the beat in the sense that the beat was emphasized. Instead, the beat was produced by

the body moving: as a dancer performing a specific dance or movement, or as an observer-participant moving or hitting sticks to the beat. The bodies moving made explicit that which all participants could already feel: the sense of inner time. This is evidence of the interconnectedness and interaction between bodies that is involved in musicking. No one body is separate from the other bodies participating, they are constantly exchanging sound and visual information with one another and their surroundings as a means of creating the rhythm.

This case is one example of how the body can meet, engage with, and incorporate unfamiliar music into its own repertoire. It describes the necessary exchange and interactions, social and musical, between people and places involved in integrating new practices into familiar ones, which often results in a new, blended point of reference. A kind of hybridization or creolization of new and known practices occurs, and the end result, although a sum of its parts, is different than those parts on their own. This is not to say that the result is a mish-mash mess of different ingredients. Rather it is more appropriate to say that it is like a tapestry with a variety of interwoven threads. The individual threads are still present and individually identifiable, but when woven together they produce a third uniquely identifiable element. Hybridization in music is constantly occurring, as the many, constantly evolving genres, and musics that don't fit into said genres, are evidence of.

I think it is possible to understand the body's experience of any unfamiliar music in this way, although the music discussed in this study is also a music that has traditionally been otherized and exoticized. It would be interesting, for instance, to investigate further the experience of adults engaging with music of younger generations, vice versa, or of bodies at any age engaging with other unfamiliar genres within their spheres of contact. The body's participation as a part of the music on a phenomenological level is also an approach that is applicable to all musics, and could be a useful tool in analyzing, for example, audience participation at house music concerts or clubs, or in other contexts as well. I hope that this case study can serve as a reference point for future study into both the body's role in musicking, and the processes involved both in learning music and musicking, and the natural hybridization and evolution of an individual's musical habitus that occurs when he or she encounters new music and musical practices.

Images and Examples

Image 1: Map of Ghana, with traditional lands of the Fanti, Ga and Ewe ethnic groups marked. **p. 21.**

Image 2.1: Social and Geographical Connections Between Participants. **p. 41**

Image 2.2: Social and Geographical Connections Between Teachers and Other Participants. **p. 42**

Example 1.1: A transcription of the gangkogui rhythm in Sikchyi style, with feet stomps and stick hits on the beat. **p. 47**

Example 1.2: A transcription of the gangkogui rhythm in Sikchyi style, with feet stomps on beat and stick hits off-beat. **p. 47**

Example 1.1 – 1.2 Audio: An audio clip of the gangkogui rhythm in Sikchyi style, with feet stomps and stick hits on the beat, then with feet stomps on beat and stick hits off-beat.

Performed by me. *Track title: 01-example1112-Sikchyi_BeatExercise.wav*

Example 1.3: A transcription of the gangkogui rhythm in Gahu style, with feet stomps and stick hits on the beat. **p. 48**

Example 1.4: A transcription of the gangkogui rhythm in Gahu style, with feet stomps on beat and stick hits off-beat. **p. 48**

Example 1.3 – 1.4 Audio: An audio clip of the gangkogui rhythm in Gahu style, with feet stomps and stick hits on the beat, then with feet stomps on beat and stick hits off-beat.

Performed by me. *Track title: 02-example1314-Gahu_BeatExercise.wav*

Example 2: A transcription of a section of choreographed Agbadza with the following parts transcribed: Gangkogui, Kagan, two supporting drums, the lead drum signal to change variations, the classic Ewe chest movement, hand claps, hand waves, feet hops and feet steps. **p. 48**

Example 2 Video: A clip from my fieldwork in Ghana showing the transition to the transcribed variation, the transcribed variation and the transition from the variation. In this video a number of participants and our dance teacher are dancing, I play the bell, Kristina Aspeqvist plays the Kagan, and three Ghanaian drummers play the lead drum and the supporting drums. *Track title: 03-example2-ChorAgbadza.mp4*

Example 3.1: A transcription of a rhythm exercise from Kristina Aspeqvist's drum class in Stockholm. The rhythm is played to a 3/4 pattern. **p. 49**

Example 3.1 Audio: A recording of the same rhythm with the 3/4 beat. Performed by me. *Track title: 04-example31-Appelkaka_Beat.wav*

Example 3.2: A transcription of a rhythm exercise from Kristina Aspeqvist's drum class in Stockholm. The rhythm is played to a 6/8 pattern. **p. 50**

Example 3.2 Audio: A recording of the same rhythm with the 6/8 beat. Performed by me.

Track title: 05-example32-Appeltartellett_Beat.wav

Example 3.3: A transcription of the rhythm from Kristina Aspeqvist's drum class in Stockholm with the beat from both 3/4 and 6/8. **p. 50**

Example 4 Audio: A recording of Agbekor drums with the following instruments: gangkogui, axatse, kagan, kidi, totogi. Performed by me. *Track title: 06-example4-Agbekor-GAxKagKidToKlo.wav*

Example 4.1: A transcription of the gangkogui rhythm in Agbekor style with three possible ways to feel the beat. **p. 51**

Example 4.1 Audio: A recording of the gangkogui rhythm in Agbekor style with three possible ways to feel the beat. Performed by me. *Track title: 07-example41-Agbekor_beats.wav*

Example 4.2: A transcription of the following drum rhythms in Agbekor style and three possible ways to feel the beat: gangkogui, axatse, kagan, one possible kagan variation, kidi, totogi, kloboto. **p. 52**

Example 4.3: A transcription of Agbekor supporting drums and the body's basic movement. **p. 53-54**

Example 4.3 Video: A video of me dancing the Agbekor basic movement, and links to others dancing the same movement on YouTube. *Track title: 08-example43-Agbekor-BasicMovement.mp4*

Example 4.4: A transcription of Agbekor supporting drums and the body's movements during the turnaround. **p. 55-56**

Example 4.4 Video: A video of me dancing the Agbekor basic movement, and links to others dancing the same movement on YouTube. *Track title: 09-example44-Agbekor-turnaround.mp4*

Example 5 Audio: An audio clip from my fieldwork in Ghana. This clip was recorded about a week and a half after we started learning Agbadza. In the clip you can hear how the students play together during notes of even-length, but seem to lose a sense of time for notes of differing rhythmic value, resulting in a mish-mash sound. **p. 56** *Track title: 10-example5-LearningAgbadza*

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