

PROJECT REPORTS

RESEARCH FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARTS

SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DRAMA

In his speech, The African Genius, Osagyefo the President expressed several hopes for the Institute of African Studies, some of which are clearly realizable, through the creative functioning of the School of Music and Drama established in 1962 as the Performing Arts Sector of the Institute of African Studies.

"I hope" said Osagyefo, "that the School of Music and Drama, which works in close association with the Institute of African Studies will provide this Institute with an outlet for creative work, and for the dissemination of knowledge of the arts through its extension and vacation courses, as well as through regular full-time courses. I hope also that this Institute, in association with the School of Music and Drama, will link the University of Ghana closely with the National Theatre movement in Ghana. In this way the Institute can serve the needs of the people by helping to develop new forms of dance and drama, of music and creative writing, that are at the same time closely related to our Ghanaian traditions and express the ideas and aspirations of our people at this critical stage in our history. This should lead to new strides in our cultural development..."

..." The...guiding principle which I would emphasise is the urgent need to search for, edit, publish and make available sources of all kinds....' In studying the arts, however, you must not be content with the accumulation of knowledge about the arts. Your researches must stimulate creative activity; they must contribute to the development of the arts in Ghana and other parts of Africa, they must stimulate the birth of a specially African literature, which, exploring African themes and the depth of the African soul, will become an integral portion of a general world literature. It would be wrong to make this a mere appendage of world culture"

..." In addition to publishing the results of its research in a form in which it will be made available to scholars, the Institute must be concerned with its diffusion in a more popular form among a much wider public. While there are many channels through which this new learning can be spread - including radio and, in the very near future, television - I am particularly anxious that the Institute should assist the Government in the planning and production of new text-books for use in our secondary schools, training colleges, workers' colleges and educational institutions generally..."¹

Working details of the functions stated for the School of Music and Drama are designed to make it possible for the Institute of African Studies to fulfil such important hopes. Thus, is provided, the opportunity to place products of research undertaken by the Institute's staff into creative use; for experimental application, for interpretation and re-interpretation, for new creative development, for dissemination in the media of performances and publications and therefore for the testing of public response.

Research material employable in the manner described ranges beyond the obvious classifications, since the task in hand - that of delineating and reinforcing the cultural and artistic image of a people - demands engagement with research material from other fields of discipline such as History, Sociology, Politics and African Languages.

In this connection, the Ashanti Research Project of the Institute, in its total coverage represents an invaluable body of research information from which significant viewpoints and interpretations are conveniently extractable for meaningful creative output.

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1. The African Genius - Speech delivered by Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, at the opening of the Institute of African Studies on 25th October, 1963.

- The Ananse Play ;
The "Trios" and Concert Parties;
The Cantata and its link with the musical;
The Dance Drama;
- The history of Costume
- Social significance;
 - Materials, design.
- Make Up
- Social significance
 - Materials, effects etc.
- Theatre design and architecture in Ghana;
A study of Audience Response to types of drama;
A survey of the extent and nature of Drama work
in schools and colleges , noting physical facilities
and available literary material.

DANCE:

Traditional dances of Ghana and other African countries, (including songs, drumming and costume).

Particular dances - their significance, and their setting in particular societies; and the uses of such dances in other contexts such as pageants and drama. Detailed investigation into the form, construction, design and dynamics etc.

SPECIFIC MUSIC STUDIES:

Traditional Musical Instrument:
"Music of the Gods" - a study of African music and worship;
A study of the Ghanaian Highlife as an aspect of change;
Guitar music in the Concert Party tradition;
The music of Asafo in relation to the entire structure and
function of Asafo companies, with particular reference to Winneba.

It is considered important to involve the students of the School in some of the processes of this research programme, particularly when opportunities for observation, investigation, recording, and active participation in performance sessions are available in various parts of the country.

Prior to the establishment of the School, much research material had already been collected in the field of Musicology. 1

Some texts of oral literature had also been collected as necessary elements of Musicological studies, but not enough to provide an adequate coverage for application in either the Institutes' post-graduate courses in African Literature, or in the teaching and training programme of the School. Nor, had much research been done in the relevant fields of Drama and Dance.

In the first two years of the School's existence it has been imperative for the Institute's staff who are directly concerned with the School, to plan their research programmes with the objective of closing this gap. Lines of research have developed as follows, and with an awareness of their interrelationships:

LITERATURE:

The main forms of African oral literature with particular reference to themes, formal characteristics, styles, modes of recital, and their distribution and use.

The Poetry of Nkurodo
The Poetry of Asafo
Popular drumming and songs
Songs of fishing communities in Anlo as poetry
Poetry of Trade Cults among the Anlos
Dirges among the Akan and the Anlos
The Poetry of Adzewa and Adenkum in Fanteland
Yewe Cult language and literature
Historical narratives as Anlo literature.

Oral literature about water (rivers, streams, lagoons and the sea) with a special focus on themes related to religious beliefs, and philosophy.

ANANSESEM: - Folktales of Ghana

DRAMA: - Story-telling as a dramatic art
Dramatic features in Ghanaian festivals
Dramatic enactment in Mkurodo performances
The history of the Drama Movement
-Traditional forms-
-The New Drama-

Study of specific forms of drama, particularly:-

1. See Institute of African Studies Library Collection.

Development arising out of this first phase of research is coming into evidence in:

- (a) the performance programmes of the School¹ of Music and Drama.
- (b) the development of courses and technical studies for the teaching of African Music, Dance and Drama.
- (c) the extension work being undertaken, through demand, by the School of Music and Drama in advisory, tutorial, and training capacities for schools and colleges, communities, and voluntary organisations.
- (d) the establishment of a Community Drama project in ATWIA - Ekumfi through the literature research programmes of the Institute of African Studies.
 - (i) to facilitate literature, drama, music and dance studies on a 'laboratory' basis in a rewarding location;
 - (ii) to foster a crossbreeding between traditional performance arts and the creative experimentation of the School of Music and Drama;
 - (iii) to develop an outpost for the dissemination of new artistic developments which will as well employ the services of the trained personnel from the School.

PERFORMANCES During the Term

- A. The Dance Division
- B. Drama & Theatre Studies Division etc.

1. Performances during the Term

- A. The Dance Division
- B. Drama & Theatre Studies Division.