

about their own and their siblings up-brining, and marriages, and about their children's rearing histories. With this material it should be able to trace fostering ties through three generations and to discover the effect of the variables noted above. An additional 40% interviews were obtained from Daboya in Central Gonja. The sample of "successful" men was repeated in Bole.

Almost none of this data has yet been analysed, but taken together with observations and more general material it should provide the basis for answering the three questions raised in planning the study.

Esther Goody

MUSICALITY AND MUSICIANSHIP IN
NORTH-WESTERN GHANA

This report is based on three surveys made during the months of July, 1963, April, 1964 and February, 1965, in the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana. It deals with some aspects of xylophone traditions of the Dagaba, the Lobi and the Brifor-Wilii, three language groups living in widely over-lapping territories in the north-west of Ghana.

In this area the accomplishment of the xylophone player reveals uncommon depth of musicality and musicianship. By musicality I mean a musical intelligence sharpened and broadened by wide experience in music; I use the term musicianship to cover the kind of accomplishment which comes with intensive training and practice.

The work of three of those interviewed and seen at work clearly depicts these qualities. The Tizza Na (The Chief of Tizza village), who was also a great hunter of elephants, began to play the xylophone at the

age of seven . His grandfather was a xylophone maker and player, and his performance showed that he had made good use of the opportunities of his early days. But more striking, perhaps, was his sensitivity to music. When a recording of another great player was played to him he said with great feeling, "Ah, that's Ninkara's performance. The beauty of the music cuts deep. It is full of feeling and compelling Listen, can you hear that charming part ?"

It was clear that the Tizza Na was in possession of a knowledge of style and a musical perception that none of his visitors had yet acquired. His reaction forcefully suggested a system of musical knowledge that would be worth exploring. It was a manifestation of unusual musicality.

Sazu Ninkara of Birifor, whose recording had so touched the Tizza chief, had not only shown virtuosity and sensitivity of execution. He had showed also a deep knowledge of practical acoustics and a high skill for making xylophones, which he said he had acquired from his father. His description of his method of firing the wood for his instruments, shaping, tuning, boosting up and tempering the sound quality of the keys included many significant considerations, such as ensuring the uniform vibration of the keys when sounded, adjusting frequencies of vibration to resonating gourds, and the enrichment of the tone of his instrument by what he described as the independent "singing" of the spider's membranes he had used to cover sound holes made on the gourd resonators.

Another xylophone maker, Mr. Lanyaare, a Lobi residing at Lawra, was observed at a public performance, later interviewed in his home, and subsequently closely studied as he demonstrated at Legon. His histrionic gifts, his deep involvement, his breadth of repertory, and his dexterity at performance put him in the same class as Ninkara and the Tizza Na, if a little less clear in explaining his art. Lanyaare claimed to have taught himself to make and play xylophones. If this is accurate, his excellence at both crafts should be ascribed not only to his own personal gifts but also to the society which had inspired him.

Besides their practical skills, taste and mental attitudes, the musical accomplishments of these three men (and their societies) indicated many opportunities for high level musicality and musicianship. This was also evident in the variety of musical types associated with festival dances and general entertainment. The popular music of Bawa, a social dance, the traditional music of kobene the Lo-Brifor pre-harvest dance, the Lobi harvest circle dance, Soer, and its postlude form, Boybene, as well as specific funeral pieces like Darakpon, Benkpen and Pokobo form the basic framework of a classificatory system covering form and structure in music.

Performance seemed to be conceived in terms of extended movements usually arranged in a specific order. For instance, extended soer dances were always followed by Boybene which was described as a dispersal dance. Every set of movements was preceded by a prelude consisting of a rhapsodic, moodsetting introduction called doon. In performances with singers, this also set the pitch and defined the song to be sung. The Doon led straight into the main opening piece called Kyuo or Kyuobo by the Dagaba.

Performers tended to use the same Doon for the various pieces in one dance type, though slight variations seemed to be allowed. The opening piece, however, tended to be less variable. In Boybene the Doon generally developed into an opening dance called Dero.

Each piece (or movement) within a set (or dance type) was characterised by stock rhythmic and melodic figurations, motifs and patterns which were elaborately improvised upon and re-shuffled according to the performer's skill and artistry. A piece which began with phrase A at one performance could begin with phrase B at another, and each of these phrases could appear with different figurations at both performances. A piece was normally brought to an end by a reversion to the Doon (introductory) style, which might be gradually broken off or re-organised into a new one for the next piece. Sazu Ninkara gave warning about coming Doon codas by repeated octaves on the treble keys and a sudden jump to the lowest keys.

This never failed to draw even visitors' attention to the coming of something new.

Xylophone technique in north-west Ghana is a combination of hocket and accompaniment. Players were found in ensembles of two and three with support from gourd drums (kuor), one or two mini-drums (Deli or Dali) each consisting of the neck of a clay pot severed from its body and covered with eguana skin, and a number of iron castanets (Kpekpe). The Lobis have also a tradition of solo playing in which a virtuoso player combines the hocket with a self-accompaniment technique of great artistry.

In many other ways - in the classification and sub-divisions of their musical instruments, in their naming of individual keys, in their musical terms describing tessitura and tone colour, in their orchestral combination and rhythmic organisation - the xylophone societies in north-western Ghana not only provide rich traditions which fully involve all their members, but also depict a versatility of culture that provides abundant material for the student of musicology.

Atta Annan Mensah