

Ijuba to a Sage - Muse



The Man J.H. Kwabena Nketia

IN many respects, Professor J.H. Kwabena Nketia embodies that now familiar irony of the human condition: the strive to the future to discover the past, yet we invariably cast a retrospective glance to apprehend the future. At Eighty One, Kwabena Nketia's contribution to African music and musicology remains particularly outstanding, writing him into the pantheon of living legends. His compositions straddle choral works, solo songs with piano accompaniment, and the broad rubric of instrumental works that compel the past to dialogue with the present, the present with the past, in a most healthy exercise of comparative musicology. We can not even begin to detail his bibliography which spans the diverse and intricate web of music-making and interpretation. His imprint and contribution dot the continents, yet Kwabena Nketia remains a community creative activist in his homeland, Ghana. It is to this icon, this sage, this walking encyclopaedia and muse of our time, that this edition of Glendora Review is dedicated: Ijuba ooo...GR

— Editors

J. H.
J. H. Kwabena
J. H. Kwabena-Nketia
(Ajanaku koja mo ri nkan firil)
Thrice now we have asked:
Who can tether the elephant?

our Nketia, kindred disciple of noise
himself
black noise, logic of the inchoate?
he who straddles soundscapes
master of the multiform
nimble wit in whose staccato
the music-congeal unravels

your drizzle at four score and one
are these fresh dews on the fern
who pay tribute
part, to your redolent ways
part, for sharing a glimpse into your
world
where sprouts the gom-gom of djembe
the frill of the flute
the shriek of textured horns

peer of the ageless
now hear us out:
guide us through this labyrinth
across these islands
whose crests and troughs witnessed:
the whip
the shark
the cling-clang of the chain-gang

mend our dis-chord
find us tuned
unbabble, unbabel our voice

though we only ask
from you a mere sinner
from you who is not a saint ...
for we know of none **GR**

—Sola Olorunyomi

J.H
J.H Kwabena
Ba ba pe ori akoni a fi ida lale garaga
J.H. Kwabena omo Nketia o o
Ajanaku koja mo ri nkan firi
Oba ti o ma mu erin so koti je

Nketia tiwa, lwo laba peni Ogun ti o lana
fun awon orisa yoku
agogo, saworo, gedu, ati bata, lodo orisa
lati mari
awoko loga ede. Bi awoko o
ba pede kini ibaka ma ko?

Ojo weli weli lati okanle ni ogorin
Iri to se si ara ewe lo di nini ni owuro to
tutu aso ero oko ati ero ona
To fi orisun gom-gom ti djembe han
Didun fere ati ifon inu re

Oye lagba nwo
O wa teti si wa
Fi ona han wa lati to ona yiidopin
Mu wa la ereko yii ti lilo soke sodo re ti ri:
Iya
Iku
Sekeseke

Fun wa lorogbo kohun wa legbo
Fun wa logede kohun wa le de
Eyi la toro
Bi o tile je elese bi ti wa ni iwo
alai d'ese omo eniyan kan ko
kuku si **GR**

—Translation: Adebola Olorunyomi