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A Night of Sikyi Dance: The Socio-Cultural Sensual Dialectics of Asante Dance through Performance Art

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Abstract:

Research on Asante's performances and arts overlooks the theme of Sexuality which has been misconstrued as being shrouded in secrecy and out of the public eye of which this paper has proven wrong. Evidence comes from our fieldwork in Asante on their erotic arts from ethnographic, cultural and artistic traditions. Also, a review of the literature on Sikyi and its aesthetic as well as ethical dialectics was thoroughly done. Data was solicited through personal and telephone interviews from respondents who were purposively sampled as well as participant observation. The study revealed that the societal ignorance of or the lack of interest in the Asante cultural eroticism has resulted in its extinction. Sikyi dance provided quite worthy a case to be studied to gather the linkage between the Akan people's sexuality and contexts within their cultural ethos and fragments of its complementarities in 'sex education' within their standards of living.

Keywords: Aesthetics, asante, ethics, flirtation, sexuality, sikyi dance

1. Introduction

Artistes and patrons of contemporary dance performances express their well-defined aesthetic preferences to their audience without critically looking at the ethical implications of their sexual content to the society. Aesthetics of Africa is generally derived from an ethical or religious stance the people represent and several studies have been conducted on the religious and ethical dimensions of Africa's societies which greatly influence the aesthetic discourse on the arts (performance art) and culture of the people (Gyekye, 2010; Green, 1983; Onwuekwe, 2009).

1.1. Sikyi as a Dance

The most basic motive of a dance is the physical expression of inner emotion; and dance occupies an integral place in cultures throughout the African continent, embodying energy and a graceful beauty flowing with rhythm (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2008). African dance has been described as "indigenous dance forms practiced by the peoples of the countries of the sub-Saharan African continent in social or religious contexts, for entertainment or as a choreographed art form" (Badejo & Banerji, 2002).

Sikiyi is a form of drumming and dancing which came into vogue not only with the Asante, but also in the whole Akan area of Ghana in the 1920's. It is characterized by dance postures and movements which simulate the dynamics of courtship through contrasting demonstrations of strutting and bobbing, theatrical elegance, pastoral innocence, and abandonment. Sikiyi is a contagiously exciting and flirtatious dance of the Akan along with its intricate Sikiyi drumming.

Sikiyi dance is a means of marking the beginning of life's sexual experiences, encouraging the youth to meet and choose partners to court. It is also done purely for entertainment and enjoyment. It expresses the life of the community more than the mood of an individual or a couple. The essence of the dance is in its aesthetic values as regards the rhythmic complexity of movements. The dancers could move their shoulders to one beat, hips to another, and knees to a third to the drum of Sikiyi.

Every dance has its profound ethics, meanings and aesthetics peculiar to its originating society within a geographical area. Sikiyi provides quite a worthy case to be studied to gather the linkage between the Akan people's sexuality and the contexts within their cultural ethos and elements or fragments of its complementarities.

Perhaps, Sikiyi is particularly a dramatic example of "civilizing mission" of Christianity and colonialism, and more clothing is often worn for certain dances, particularly to cover sexually provocative body parts. Conventionally, when women performed this dance, they wore small pieces of cloth held in place by waist-beads, called "sekyi" in the Twi language. These garments concealed only the private parts (Schauert, 2015).

Harper (1967) distinguishes between ethnic and theatrical dances and postulates that ethnic dance is an integral function of a society in which the form and motivation of the dance are familiar to all members of that society as a statement of their way of life. The spectators, as a specific audience, assess the performance in terms of customary standards and so assure that the dance performs its required function, and that the introduction of new elements accords with that function and the accepted criteria of what constitutes a dance in the society may involve a formal or improvised participation by members of the audience in the performance. This is a role subsidiary to that of the recognised performers.

The basic pattern of movements for the ethnic dance is established over a period of time as a communal act to which creative individuals contribute elements that are socially acceptable. By contrast, in the theatrical situation, the dance is consciously designed, or deliberately organised, at a particular time by an individual director for the entertainment of a general, impersonal audience to whom all the elements of the dance are not necessarily familiar.

Dance "...cannot be taken independently, torn out of its socio-cultural context, and separated from creator(s), a psycho-somatic entity. It must be viewed as a complex phenomenon (dance-music-text with the necessary props e.g. costumes) representing a culturally patterned, grammatically structured, meaningfully kinetic sign system used, performed, manifested in a community by its members" Felfoldi (2001, p. 17).

Sikiyi, therefore, is characterized as an ethnic dance as members of the Asante society inculcate their day to day activities in their dance that eventually evolves into a ritualized activity (Harper, 1967). Undoubtedly, the Sikiyi dance has proven over the years to be a formidable medium through which cultural and artistic knowledge are passed on from one generation to another, especially in oral cultures which have helped in preserving this intangible cultural heritage. Each culture tends to have its own distinctive styles of dance and reasons for dancing. As a result, the Sikiyi dance of the Asante can reveal much about a people and their way of life.

1.2. Sikiyi and Its Ethics

The Sikiyi dance serves as a significant tool to effect both complicated and uncomplicated ethics of the social morals within the social structure of the Asante society. The dancer in this case is much more than a performer. The dancer, in this regard, is a teacher, a historian, a spiritual medium, a healer and a storyteller (Onwuekwe, 2009).

Several scholars including Gyekye (1996), Opoku (1974) and, Nketia (1965) have written extensively on the moral and ethical concerns in traditional African societies relating it to the people's religion. The phenomenon of religion is so pervasive in the life of the Akan, and so inextricably bound up with their culture, that it is not easy to isolate what is purely religious from other aspects of life. It may be said without fear or exaggeration that life in the Akan world is religion, and religion is life. (Opoku, 1974), and all these valuable ethics are exhibited in the Sikiyi performance art.

The histories about the Sikiyi dance too have not been an elaborate one as its origin and meanings as well as how it came about is shrouded in oral histories thereby getting diluted through the centuries till now but any dance form which is not rooted in the past, which is of the present only casting no shadow into the future dies with the generation that create it (Opoku 1966). Furthermore, there are fundamental principles of morality that binds every member of the community regardless of age and status. These principles are in place to create sanity, respect for each other and to authority not forgetting societal norms. Obviously, these principles of morality manifest when Sikiyi is being performed (Opoku, 1974).

Frank Willett (1971) explains the common assertion made by most critics that 'art for art's sake' does not exist in Africa and that all of Africa's arts are religious. He said, that, -in the Western society, when art critics speak of 'art for art's sake...the final product, however, does have an acquired social function; it may be used to decorate a room or serve as a status symbol (p. 164).

Although Willett's statement is towards the plastic arts, the acquired social function of Sikiyi is well spelt out for entertainment and education.

Notably, the Asante seemed to have lifted the ban on open discussion of sexuality during Sikiyi performances and bragoro rites and the nuances of sexuality are openly discussed with the youth, and for them to demonstrate their dancing skills for the relatives and most importantly prospective suitors who gather to admire the display of feminine grace and beauty.

The focus of this study is on the socio cultural, aesthetic and ethical relevance associated with Sikiyi dance in the discussions of the sexuality of the Asante since it is known to be a flirtatious dance. It also examines the relevance of the dance in the culture of the Asante with implications in the contemporary Ghanaian contextual cultural praxis and world culture.

African art has proved to be one of the highest expressions of human culture which brings us continual refreshment and adds to the artistic heritages of humanity with the knowledge of the world of ideas they reflect especially as it reflects in Sikiyi, the flirtatious performance art of the Asante. It is the aim of this paper to discuss the Sikiyi dance pattern, costuming and some song accompaniment illustrating the flirtatious nuances that bother on the Asante sexuality.

2. Methodology

The organization of the research is done with the qualitative research method using interviews in relation to a flux of verbal structures of the Akan ethical notions regarding their sexuality through dance. This means that the information collected from the selected key members of a community including dancers and older folks who had a personal experience of the performance in their childhood (period before Ghana's independence and after), were analyzed with their ethical, aesthetic and socio-cultural dimensions of the Asante culture. Also, the research involved an in-depth study which included observing the performance. Respondents included queen mothers, retired and active dancers of the Kumasi

Cultural Centre along with other older folks who were directly involved and participated in this performance decades ago before and after the period of Ghana's Independence and recounted their personal experiences as facts. All interviews were conducted in the Asante Twi language as respondents were more comfortable expressing themselves due to their level of illiteracy.

3. Results and Discussion

Siki dance is basically performed for entertainment and danced at all events and occasions except funerals. Siki dancers use handkerchiefs in both hands to create extensions of the fingers like how Indian and Japanese dancers make use of their flexible hands and fingers as extensions. It is danced in groups of not more than three and in pairs (male and female). It is usually accompanied with drumming, clapping and singing. Detailed comprehension of Siki drumming is adequately provided by Nketia (1965). While clapping and singing are generally done by the members of the ensemble and audience participating in rhyming rhythmically with the drum players, dancers can only add singing to their repertoire. All these variations in the music, dance movements and even costuming are all shrouded in oratory but most researchers concentrate highly on how the dance features relate to matters of ideology, social class, nationality, sexuality, gender and others (Naranjo, 2010).

Green (1985) also stipulates that any system depending entirely upon oral communication for its transmission is doomed to partial failure because of human memory and outside interpretation. But for Gyekye (1996), morality is socially designed out of the relations between individuals: if there were no such thing as human society, there would be no such thing as morality. Some of the examples of Siki songs provided by Acheampong (personal communication, 2007), a former dancer at the Cultural Centre, Kumasi, are discussed below.

3.1. Song 1 (Twi Version)

Sii, sɔɔ

Sii, sɔɔ

Siki e yenni ntoma o yɛɛ goro o

Siki e yenni ntoma o yɛɛ goro o

Siki de ne ho aba Sala Kumi e

Sala kumi de ne ho aba Siki komfo e

Yeni ntoma e yɛɛ goro o.

3.1.1. Literal Translation (English)

Sii, sɔɔ

Sii, sɔɔ

Siki we do not have cloths but we dance

Siki we do not have clothes but we dance

Siki has brought itself, Sala Kumi (name of a person)

Sala Kumi has brought herself, Siki priest

We do not have cloths but we dance.

3.1.2. Dialectics of Song

The call, 'sii', and response, 'sɔɔ', of the shortened name of the dance Siki precedes the actual song. It is a way of welcoming everyone to the gathering, both participants and audience present as a symbol of respect and recognition. This call and response among performers also signify their readiness and eagerness to perform. The song goes on to say that 'they do not have clothes but they dance', signifying how much they love to dance disregarding material aesthetics on apparel. This buttresses the assertion Schaurt (2015) made that, the dance was originally performed with less clothes only covering the private parts. In a way, the exposure of the erogenous zones of the females makes them more attractive to the men as they can feast their eyes on the aesthetics of the female figure in awe projecting highly desirable wish for courtship. 'Siki de ne ho aba Sala Kumi e', which literally translates to "Siki has brought itself", meaning Siki has presented them an opportunity to express themselves and it would not be wasted. 'Sala Kumi (feminine name) has availed herself' to be appreciated. Siki priest which also suggests she would be the center of attraction in the performance. There are moments in a repertoire where names of persons with good moral status in the society are slung into the songs as a form of ethical message. A request can also be made by an admirer for the said person's name to be mentioned in a song to flatter her and make his intentions known.

3.2. Song 2 (Twi Version)

Siki hema e yaa bra o

Siki hema e yaa bra o

Ɔɔɔ yewu abanaba e yaa bra o

Ɔɔɔɔ bibire nase yennwunu e yaa bra

Ofosu akɔɔ nkaa agu w'akyi yaa bra o

3.2.1. Literal Translation(English)

Queen of sikyi, do come

Queen of sikyi, do come

My dear love, do come

The base of a big tree (ɔdɔtɔ bibire) is very cool and airy tree canopy, do come

Ofosu has requested rings, bangles and anklets (jewellery) in your absence do come.

3.2.2. Dialectics of the Song

This song above positions the girls in the helm of royalty and describes them as queens calling on them to participate in the performance and not to be shy, encouraging them in a harmless way. Sometimes, names of people in the communities are mentioned in the songs to place emphasis on them probably for good behaviour or otherwise as part of the informal education strategies. It goes further to say Ofosu (male Akan name) has 'ordered for jewelry waiting for you so come'. From this analogy someone (Ofosu) probably requested for a particular lady to court in the community and asked the song to be geared towards introducing them.

3.3. Song3(Twi version)

WɔfaYaw Amponsah e ɔfa Yaw e

WɔfaYaw Amponsah e ɔfa na wo yɛ den ni o

3.3.1. Literal translation(English)

Uncle Yaw Amponsah

Uncle Yaw Amponsah,

Uncle, what are you doing?

3.3.2. Dialectics of the Song

Calling a man with the title of 'uncle' does not necessarily mean he is the mother's sister but rather a way of appraising a man to say he is honourable and responsible and it becomes an honour to be called uncle (wɔfa). At this point, one would wonder why male names are abounding in these songs. Simply because it is the women who sing most of these erotic lyrics and they find it appropriate to slip in male names and accolades or rather substitute a partner's name that is desired to be her own. The phrase 'What are you doing?' in the song above is an indication of the woman's detest to be toyed with. They should get onto business or better still the man should stop beating about the bush and not waste her time. This is really a message to the lazy and sluggish male individuals who are seen as seat warmers in the gathering and are not participating. On the other hand, it could be to encourage the males to be courageous to ask the girls out to court them.

The Sikyi movements are not as elaborate as the Adowa in terms of gestures, costuming and bodily adornments. There are several variations of dance styles and this is how Faustina Achaempong, a respondent and dancer, described the dance. She said the Sikyi dance is in whirls, raising the hands and lowering them in rhythmic movements with the legs. In three groups of pairs, they will move from left to right twisting the hands to make the handkerchief spin in circular motion. Always keeping eye contact between pairs or couples, dancers' moves would include strutting, bobbing up and down, a display of theatrical and air of pastoral innocence and abandonment. In these arrangements the performers seek to depict the youthful innocence and flirtation.

At the initial stage, the man will 'propose' to the woman by tapping her shoulder. She opens her palms and asks him why? When she throws her hand away, she rejects the proposal, bends her waist and turns to and fro, hits the man on the shoulder with her shoulder. She will jump, swirl and hit the man again with her hand or handkerchief on the shoulder. The man will hold his elbow with one hand and shake the fist, at the same time the woman will bend her back to the man and provocatively shake her waist and buttocks; and then she will twist and turn over and over again and dance off the grounds. In all these whirls, twists and turns the pair of dancers will keep an eye contact and smile to each other throughout the whole performance.

Facial expression is the most important feature throughout the performances followed by the movement of the waist and some significant arm gestures. In an exclusive interview with Nana Yaa Nyarko Tem (Queen mother of Adum Kwanwoma) and Madam Margaret Nnuamah (one of the pioneer dancers at the Cultural Centre, Kumasi), both respondents, about Sikyi they gave the same interesting account as Acheampong's and their personal experiences. According to them, Sikyi is an Asante linguistic term given to the ensemble but its background history is not known. It is originally an Asante dance, peculiar to the people (personal communication, May 23, 2008).

This dance is organized as a dramatization especially on full moon evenings after all household chores are completed, and both the old and young are outdoors taking in fresh air and for entertainment. Before the performance commences a 'queen mother' and a 'fetish priest/priestess' and their respective attendants for the night are chosen. Since this is an outdoor entertainment, the percussion instruments are first played to alert the community to gather at the known spot with these popular lyrics:

3.4. Song 4(Twi version)

Sikyi maawa e mo mmra o

Sikyi maawa e mo mmra o

Na yɛ kɔbɔ sikyi o'

3.4.1. Literal Translation (English)

'Attendants of Sikyi, come'

'Attendants of Sikyi, come, for we are about to perform Sikyi'

3.4.2. Dialectics of the Song

The song is informing attendants of the performance to gather and grace the occasion. This song also serves as a processional tune for all and sundry. The songs also inform performers to choose the roles they want to play in the performance, whether as attendants, traditional priest, queen mother, singers or drummers. The word 'maawa' can also mean servant in the Asante linguistic Twidialect.

When the living is called upon to engage in any activity including dance performances, ancestors of the town are also invited to support and grace the occasion with these lyrics:

3.5. Song 5 (Twi Version)

'nsamanfoɔ e mo mmra o

asona nsamanfoɔ e mo mmra o

ma agrɔ yi nsɔ.'

3.5.1. Literal Translation (English)

'Ancestors (forefathers), come

Asona (one of the eight Akan clan name) ancestors, come

for the performance to be grand.'

3.5.2. Dialectics of the Song

This song also calls upon the great ancestors of the community especially past performers to appear, grace and support them spiritually to encourage them perform better with their presence. The inclusion of a particular clan name (in this case Asona) can be substituted with any of the eight Akan clan names which are interchangeable as members arrive on the playgrounds. Reverence and recognition are thereby given to the elderly and those of past glory. When all are gathered, the chosen groups are hailed with their own songs, for instance, if the Sikyi komfo (priest/priestess) steps into the dancing arena, s/he is admitted gladly with the song:

3.6. Song 6 (Twi Version)

Sikyi komfoɔ asi dwom

Kwaa dee mongye ne yɔɔ

3.6.1. Literal translation (English)

'Sikyi priest/priestess has stepped onto the dance floor, all hail her'. 'Kwaa dee dee' is an expression used in a song to function as adlib.

3.6.2. Dialectics of the Song

The Sikyi priest or priestess would dance in whirls and stomps in the like manner of a real fetish priest, and he/she dances and carries himself/herself as such, in a priestly costume of course. The priest or priestess would have a servant who follows him/her with a bowl of powder and as he/she performs the servant smears the powder (usually white clay) on him/her. He/she would throw some powder to the ground and step on it simultaneously three times, support himself/herself on one leg as he/she hops, twists and turns. In all his/her act, she would perform all the 'duties' of a real fetish priest/priestess but devoid of its spiritual symbolism; the performance is enjoyed for its entertaining feature and for that reason, he/she could add his/her own style and antics to it to grace the occasion. The priest/priestess usually enters the dance at the climax of the performance and the commencement as he/she will probably pray and bless the occasion.

Similarly, the chosen queen mother of the performance is adorned in an outfit just like an actual queen mother with her servants and her procession will include all of them as happens in the actual queen's palace. She would dance gracefully and will be appreciated with the lyrics titled 'Sikyi hema' (Sikyi queen mother) which is earlier mentioned in sample song two.

Like all other Akan performances, both men and women dance together. While the men play the instruments the women do most of the singing (ranges from praising, teasing, merry, flirtation to insinuations). Two lines are formed, one by males and the other, females, standing opposite each other as partners. Performers always dance in pairs (male and female) which inform or educate about right sexual orientation eliminating ideas of homosexuality and promote the need to procreate. Both males and females hold handkerchiefs in both hands when dancing. Whilst dragging one foot towards the other foot placed in front, the arms move inwards the chest and swing out to the hip in a rhythmic motion with the drumming and singing. The rhythmic movements of the handkerchiefs in the hands of the dancers look like multiple fans in motion. As the two opposing lines meet, the partners also meet and touch, intertwining, shoulders touching then part, letting the males occupy the original female opposing side and vice versa. Partners maintain eye contact in the process and

facial expressions overtly sensual. Some men in the audience do take part in the performances by giving out money to the dancers on the platform and when they finish spending their money the women hoot at them with this song repeatedly: 'wakɔ bɔ sikyi abɔ ka kwaa dee dee mongyae no o' meaning 'he has attended Sikyi dance performance and spent all his money in vain, leave him'.

Getting to the climax of the performance deep into the night, an announcement will be made for all to prepare to retire to their homes with the lyrics:

3.7. Song 7 (Twi Version)

Momma yɛngyae o
 Momma yɛnkɔda o
 agrɔ bɛ wie fri anopa tutu o
 agrɔ bɛ wie fri anopa tutu o
 Momma yɛngyae o
 Momma yɛnkɔda o

3.7.1. Literal Translation (English)

Let us stop
 Let us go and sleep
 If a performance would be grand, it starts from the early morning
 Let us stop
 Let us go and sleep

3.7.2. Dialectics of the Song

The singer also serves as the time keeper for the event because in the midst of the excitement they definitely lose track of time and as most of the community members are farmers, they need to wake up early to go and work on their farms. This promotes unity and respect amongst the members of the society.

Nana Tim (Personal Communication, May 23, 2008) recounts that the first public performance of Sikyi dance was in the Adum Township few years before Ghana declared Independence from the British rule. Other towns such as Asafo and Fante New Town (Asante towns within the Kumasi metropolis) later organized their own ensembles and when all the groups gather at the Kumasi Cultural Centre to perform, certainly there is rivalry and challenge amongst them and one of the songs that the Adum ensemble would sing to tease them was:

3.8. Song 8 (Twi version)

Adwoa e wokunu mpɛ wo gyae o
 Adwoa Kwamu e wokunu mpɛ wo gyae o
 Adwoa de neho aba ɔso ketɛ guo aye
 Adwoa fri akura aba ɔso ketɛ guo aye
 Adwoa Kwamu e wokunu mpɛ wo gyae o
 Kurase ni baa kɔ da o

3.8.1. Literal Translation (English)

Adwoa if your husband doesn't love you, leave
 Adwoa Kwamu if your husband doesn't love you, leave
 Adwoa has brought herself; she carried an old tattered mat on her head
 When Adwoa came from the village, she carried an old tattered mat on her head
 Adwoa Kwamu if your husband doesn't love you, leave
 Village woman go and sleep.

3.8.2. Dialectics of the Song

This song means that the Asafo queen mother of Sikyi dance was a village dweller; when she was coming from the village, she carried her mat on her head. Her husband also did not love her but she obliged. She should go back to her village where she belongs. Sikyi is usually played in the evenings for relaxation and also at durbars. During a grand durbar (Akwasidae), 'we will not be surprised if everybody joins in this performance' since there is variation of styles and quite exciting; just merry, said Nana Yaa Tem (Personal Communication, May 23, 2008).

The music of Africa is an oral tradition that has existed since the beginning of time. Any society that is totally dependent upon oral communication for the transmission of its culture between generations is doomed to failure because of outside interpretation and the breakdown of the human memory over the course of time (Green, 2012). Sikyi has inspired great highlife artists of Ghana, and its influence still draws highlife lovers to the dance floor.

3.8. Sikyi Dance Styles

Sikyi dance encompasses genre, footwork, and interesting artistic expressions. It also deals with anatomical movements (such as foot-work), as well as partner interactions, and their associations to each other and to music as an art.

It explores the communicative, physical, mental, emotional and artistic aspects of dance as a medium of human expression and interaction.

Structured movement systems occur in all known human societies. They are systems of knowledge, the products of action and interaction as well as process through which action and interaction take place and are usually part of a larger activity or activity system. These systems of knowledge are socially and culturally constructed by a group of people and primarily are preserved in the memory. Although transient, movement systems have structured content, they can be visual manifestations of social relations, the subject of elaborate aesthetic systems, and may assist in understanding cultural values (Felfoldi 2002). These systems of knowledge and culture have been aesthetically integrated in the Sikyi dance genre.

3.9. Significance of the Sikyi Dance

The Sikyi dance is known to be flirtatious and its main significance is to ensure courtship opportunities for the young and it continues to contribute to the integration of society even in these contemporary times, the dance serves as a means to teach and reinforce the Asante cultural and ethical patterns. Mbiti (1969) agrees that ethical rule practiced worldwide may promote peace and tranquility among people. He points out that;

As in all societies of the world, social order and peace are recognized by African people as essential and sacred. Where the sense of corporate life is so deep, it is inevitable that the solidarity of the community must be mentioned, otherwise there are disintegration and destruction.

The opportunity to participate in the Sikyi performance enables the youth to vent out their sexual desires in order to prevent pervasion and social vices among community members. The sexual teachings and social responsibility are well communicated through the movements and songs. This recurs throughout the premarital stage for the youth and it is believed that the presence of community elders and parents serves as a check on the youth to practice good morals in expressing their sexuality. Most of this education is done orally.

4. Conclusion

Sikiy dance is a symbol of representation of the cultural sexual identity of the Asante which exemplifies the overt nature of sexuality discussions or a set of guidelines for the society. Sexual allusions in singing and dance gestures or body movements are not in any way new to any indigene of the Asante. Dancing to the beat of a rhythm is engrained deeply in the African's nature for all gatherings both merry and humourless as well as religious occasions. Sikyi is a performance that will continue to entertain the Asante in particular and Ghanaians in general for decades and its flirtatious nature should not be frowned upon by the contemporary religious sects in the society but rather accepted and practiced by all.

This Research has also suggested how Sikyi has positively influenced the Ghanaian highlife music, and if so, then the dance can also be promoted enough and preserved to accompany contemporary Ghanaian music. Highlighting the ethical principles alongside the beauty of a composition is an integral component of the Sikyi artistry which also renders the performance aesthetically pleasing to the audience.

Africans know the language, people and terrain, and once trained in systems of notation, they can rapidly harness these dances and music to be written, checked and catalogued. Thus, Africa would have an enormous archive of written notated scores of traditional music and dance that can be read and performed from a print source (Green, 2002). Researchers and contemporary artistes should find that thin bridge connecting the past and the present cultural practices devoid of its foreign influences in the worldview.

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