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Kofi Agawu on AFRICAN MUSIC (COLOGY)

Perhaps unlike in the other disciplines of the humanities, the distinguished African music scholar is often a rarity. The foursome of **Bode Omojola** (Nigeria), **Ben Mohammed Abdallah** (Ghana), **Zabana Kongo** (DR-Congo) and **Adeolu Ademoyo** (Nigeria)—all fellows of the Northwestern seminar on contemporary African music—could not allow the opportunity slip by when **Professor Kofi Agawu** of Princeton University turned up on the Faculty. This interview, conducted at the University of Ghana, Legon, January 2002, straddles the discourse of music, musicology and the production of culture and knowledge in Africa, in this characteristic Agawu rupture of normative paradigms.

GR

It is not often that one chances on a distinguished African music scholar with whom this type of interaction can take place. Let us commence with the person: who is Kofi Agawu?

AGAWU: Well, I don't know whether you can answer that question if it is put to you succinctly; "who are you?" I suppose that on Monday we were answering it, that is to say I am Kofi Agawu, a Ghanaian by birth, more specifically an Apafu-speaking Ghanaian who grew up among Ewe-speaking people and who then went to school away from these various ways. In fact I ended up by interacting with Tiv-speaking people, people from Ekweu area. So that's one part of my lineage.

Then there, is of course, the musical part that has to do with my interest in music and which was a very early interest and that has grown and become a profession for me. But these are things leading to em....a more difficult question, which is that of self-definition. And I think it is much easier to say who people think I am and so avoid your question, or to evade your question rather because it seems to me that some people know me as somebody who writes about European music, and music theory; as an analyst, as a theorist in the United States and that's what they know of me. Some people know me as someone who has written a bit about African music and who also knows something about European music.

I see myself, I guess now I'm back to your question, as someone who has had the benefit of a wide range of discourses of music, and who in the last few years is beginning to come to terms with just the very basis of knowledge construction and, therefore, the basis of the construction of my own identity vis-avis others. So, I cannot really give you a succinct answer about who I am but I can say that I am on a way to self-discovery. It's an on-going process, and I wish I could say exactly what it is.

GR: Beyond what tags people have slapped on you, there seems to be a concern for the relationships between the Western world and Africa; specifically speaking, about African music and, broadly speaking, African arts and African culture. Could you voice some of these concerns?

Agawu: Well, I think those concerns have arisen for me because although I grew up in Ghana, I went to the U.K earlier on in my life to study music and I stayed in the West, but the interesting thing is that I was never a participant in the cultures of the West. I feel myself as someone who was an observer all the time. So, I guess I was more self-aware than some of my contemporaries who also went, you know, say from Ghana or who came from the Ivory Coast and elsewhere to study in Britain, France and later on America. Now, studying European music deeply, coming to understand, basically, its structure, which was my primary concern but then more, the scholarship around it, its context and so on, actually I think made me more aware of what the African contexts were like. In other words, the more I

knew about European music, the more I actually wanted to know about African music. And the more I dipped into the African musical realm, the more fascinated I was by the incredible resources that we have on the continent in our music, in our ways of performance, in our cultural expressions and in our ways of thinking and debate. But again, I want to stress that this came from learning about Western culture and then finding out that, boy, we have some things, you know, at least as rich, and in some areas, much richer in Africa. So that's part of the way that I came to have this concern.

Now, a more specific concern was that when thinking about African music, since I didn't come from the conventional way of approaching the subject, which has to do with ethnomusicology, I was able to look more freshly, perhaps more critically, at what people were saying about African music. And I was amazed at the kinds of presuppositions that people had made, the kinds of prejudices that were at work, which then enabled them to construct African music in a way that was completely alien to what I had understood it to be and how I had grown up to understand African music. So, in that sense, the concern is a very real concern, it's at a very visceral level for me, and I believe it's a concern that would grow as I learn more about African music. The trouble is you have to be very patient when you have these changes, so that you just don't come in and start screaming your head and saying, "why do you have everything wrong?" I really want to look carefully at the scholarship, and I think some of the things that I have written, that some persons have found disturbing, have arisen because I'm pointing out some very basic things, some really fundamental flaws that have informed the conception of and writing on African music. Sometimes this has become shocking to some people. But I feel that kind of work needs to be done.

So, that partly is where I'm coming from, with my concern about Africa. I should just add that there would be now a little left to convince me that there is a fundamental difference between Europeans and Africans, in terms of the potential for intellectual or artistic creativity. I also think that greater awareness of the complexity of the African situation, you know, is something that would help us to define the nature of our own creativity better. But I'm straying from your question.

GR: What are these flaws that you notice in the way that African music is studied, and how will you distin-

guish your own framework from the existing frameworks, ethnomusicologically?

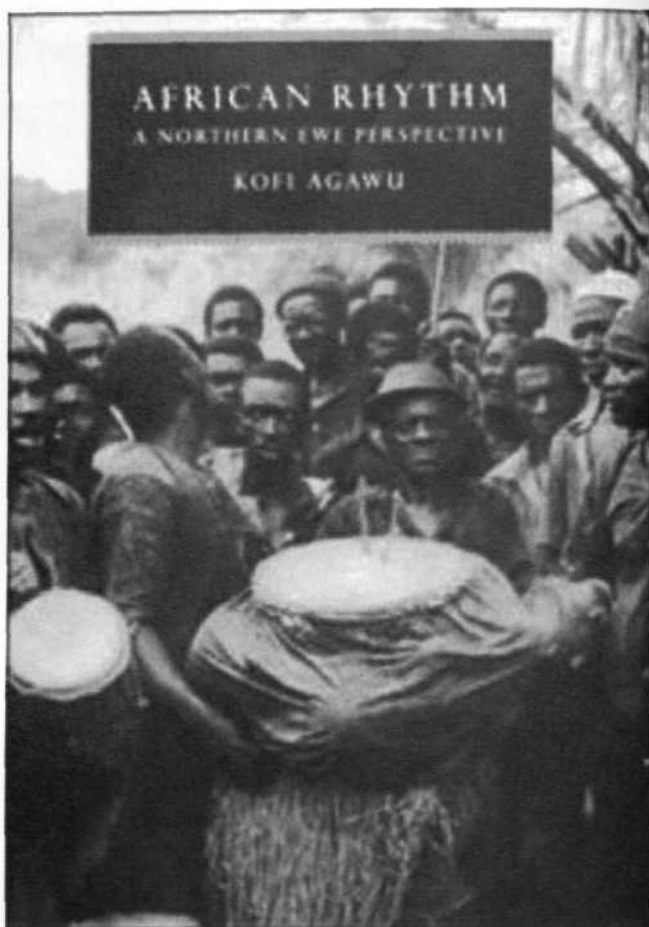
AGAWU: Flaws? Em...that's a pregnant question. Well, it seems to me that the area of rhythm is one in which certain flaws have entered the discourse. First of all, and you may not want to call this a flaw, just simply for emphasis, I think that African rhythm has become symbolic in this discourse and is, almost in a sense, synonymous with African music. Everyone is going "African rhythm, African rhythm", and this is as being the dominant characteristics, the special characteristics; that is the aspect of African music that has been most widely thematized. But as with all things, when someone is constantly thematizing an aspect, you have to ask, "what does this mean," you know; "in whose interest is it that we continue to be labeled the rhythmic people?" You know, and that's where I come in and I see that without denying certain special sensibilities, as John Chernow calls it, the "African rhythmic sensibility," it is important not to overlook the many other resources that there are: tonal resources, certain melodic tunes, certain linguistic-based approaches to either composition, to singing, to instrumental playing, and all of these are some of the things that Prof. Nketia was talking about. So, first and foremost, I think that the literature on this music is tilted to only one aspect of the African creativity. Actually, I think a more holistic approach would be better. So, the correct thing here would be to balance things out, to get people to talk about African timbres, African melody, African ways of organizing harmonies and polyphonies and things like that, some of which are absolutely fascinating. So the emphasis has become somewhat pervasive, although I understand that this emphasis on African rhythm is actually very much an emphasis on West and Central African rhythm. So, one flaw on that level is what I consider to be an over-emphasization. But beyond that, beyond the over-emphasis, then the question of an accurate description of the wholeness of African music becomes the issue.

GR: In your study of African music, how do you balance out time between traditional and contemporary African music; how much time do you devote to each?

AGAWU: Well, I have to say that my primary interest is in what you might call traditional music. If only I think that I had, and I believe many other people too have, totally underestimated the intellectual processes involved in organizing traditional music. In other

words, if you think of an Ewe dance like Gabada and what those guys do in Gabada in Ave in the Volta Region sometimes about a year and half ago, I think we've completely underestimated what is involved intellectually, and I suppose the same could be said of Aadua or Agbeko or any of these well-known Ghanaian dances.

So my interest is understandable. As an intellectual, I would go for the things that seem to offer the greatest intellectual challenges. Having said that, I know once you say traditional music is most intellectually challenging, someone in the Middle East would say, "what about popular music, what about art music?" With art and elite music, I have to say that I too, like many others, Bode here is one of them, began as a composer. You're [Bode] still active but I have become extinct as a composer. I began as a composer but never found a voice; in other words, I never found a register in which I could hear myself, sing or speak or play in a convincing way. I always felt that I was assuming a slightly different persona, that I was speaking with an accent, that I was speaking at the second level of articulation, that I was somehow removed. It wasn't really me who I thought might be making certain authentic utterances. So, having discovered that I have philosophical senses, I stopped composing. But I have to say that I'm actually quite comfortable with a fair amount of African art music, not all of it by any means but a fair amount of it, especially those that exist in the notated tradition and, although I don't want to now give you a list of specific works that I am not comfortable with; I just found something that is not quite right about it. That is where I think we need to draw a very clear distinction between writing music and composing. It seems to me that writing music as a way of discovering something about the way the musical language works is a good exercise, and we do that with our students all the time. I think that should be encouraged and suppose that, if there is anything, many more of us should write music. But to compose or to be a composer, as I said at the end of the Amu lecture, is serious business that calls for an awareness of your own social value. It is a social call and I see many composers floating about, not knowing who they are writing for. They're just assembling notes, pushing notes on paper (and then there the notes are) and then somehow they organize a performance. Well, if your music doesn't have some kind of social imperative, you know, if its social relevance is not a matter that concerns you, then why the hell are you writing it? So, I find myself in some ways quite uncomfortable



with a large number of the products of the so called African art music. It is an aversion of that tradition ... because I grew up, you know, pretty much in that tradition. I think then there are other things we can talk about in art music.

Popular music is slightly different. Although it's not a realm that I'm deeply knowledgeable about, I'm very interested in it as a very dynamic realm of activity with the kind of immediate relevance that speaks to creativity for many young people, and also to very large audiences. Popular music also has an explicit social function in that it can carry narrative, it can carry political messages, it can codify the times for us in a way that you can recall very viscerally when it comes back. So, when you go back and listen to say, E.T. Mensah's highlife, I can't imagine too many other things, not even visual devices, that can really recreate that period of the mid 50s or the 60s for you. So that realm of pop music, although it defines itself very much as the here and now without any arrogant ambitions of art music, actually ends up having a very long shelf life because of what it is able to codify, that it allows us to retrieve years later.

Now that you ask about my relation, it's a kind of

tortured relation with the three traditions. I think if I were to choose among the three forms of music, I'll have very little reservation in choosing traditional music because music, for me, leads to many other realms, it takes me into a cultural nexus, and into other aspects of culture. It takes me into customs or rhetorical methods, ethical issues, the whole value system ... and traditional music somehow is implicated in all of these things. I don't even see anyone bothering about music as an ethical expression, and I'm troubled about that. I see that among pop musicians! So if I am ambivalent about art music, it's not about the level of technical organization there; I'm very sympathetic to their trying to see what they are going to write - fourth harmonies or use of parallel terms to extend them or what their speech tone should dictate and all that. Those technical things are means to an end, but the utterance and to whom it is directed, and why and whether it emanates from some kind of spiritual awareness or ethical change, I think, are very important to any art. I know it sounds slightly very idealistic, but for too much art music, the purposes are just thrown out of the door. I should just make one little exception which is, of course, the composition of anthems - for church choirs, state anniversary and so on; these have a much more modest charge. And some of the violations that I have implied are less applicable to this sub-genre.

GR: Do you think 'African Traditional Music' is a misnomer?

AGAWU: It could be, yeah. A handful of these misused terms and categories are thrown about and now we are seeing the implications. Do you use the phrase at all yourself?

GR: I don't like it! That's why this afternoon I asked if the feeling is the same here, because I perceive the music as being so deep, so rich, so alive with contemporary issues. For me, 'traditional' sounds like something frozen, like you have to knock down boxes out of the basement, air it, dry it and bring things out of it. That's not traditional or African music at all, or what is called traditional African music. That is why I am asking the question.

AGAWU: There is one simple answer to that, and that is, of course, that it's a constraint of the kind of discourse we have; people say that there are many different kinds of music in Africa and we have to find a way of talking about them, categorizing them and

so on. So we use these grades, the strips have allowed the traditional larger and the art music larger, the elite music...and then in the middle, there is pop music. But actually once you begin to interrogate these grades you'll see that they are deeply problematic. There are certain amounts of traditional music that are very popular. I know 'Bo o Bo' tradition, for example, which some people think is new, as extremely popular, as popular as highlife in its hey days. Just to answer the second part of your question: did you ask me about framework?

GR: Yes.

AGAWU: I don't think I have a clearly worked out framework that guarantees the truth, because it would be false to do that. However, I have to say that I am motivated, in part, by an ongoing scepticism that then makes me interrogate everything, even the most common assumptions that we make. So, it's really an ongoing thing, a kind of relentless attempt to be sure that what we say, in fact what we mean, are truly reflective of the reality we claim we are reflecting. And what happens then is that your discourse starts to float because it never settles on any one thing, it doesn't give you any kind of fundamental thing, the only fundamental in what it gives you is almost the absence of a fundamental, a foundation. So, that is the sense in which I would say I have a framework. Of course, it can be very crippling when you do that. And there, one can get into how a ten-year professor in the U.S can afford to say, okay this is my time to be sceptical.

GR: I think some of the problems that you've spoken about are also reflective of the state of music education in Africa, and you did mention, during your lecture on Amu, that there is definitely some kind of crisis because it's not just the Westerners or foreigners that have these negative, if I may use the term, attitudes to African music. I think a lot of Africans, perhaps out of ignorance, too have a wrong attitude towards music. So, what's your view about the state of musical education in Africa?

AGAWU: That's a rather very broad question. I would have to say, first of all, that I personally did not have the benefit of higher education in Ghana. I left after the sixth form and went abroad. So, once I finished my 'A Levels' at Achimota, I was out of here. So I did not do a diploma at the University of Ghana; I did not do the B.Mass. or the B.F.A, or any of these degrees. Although, I had friends who did the degree here and I

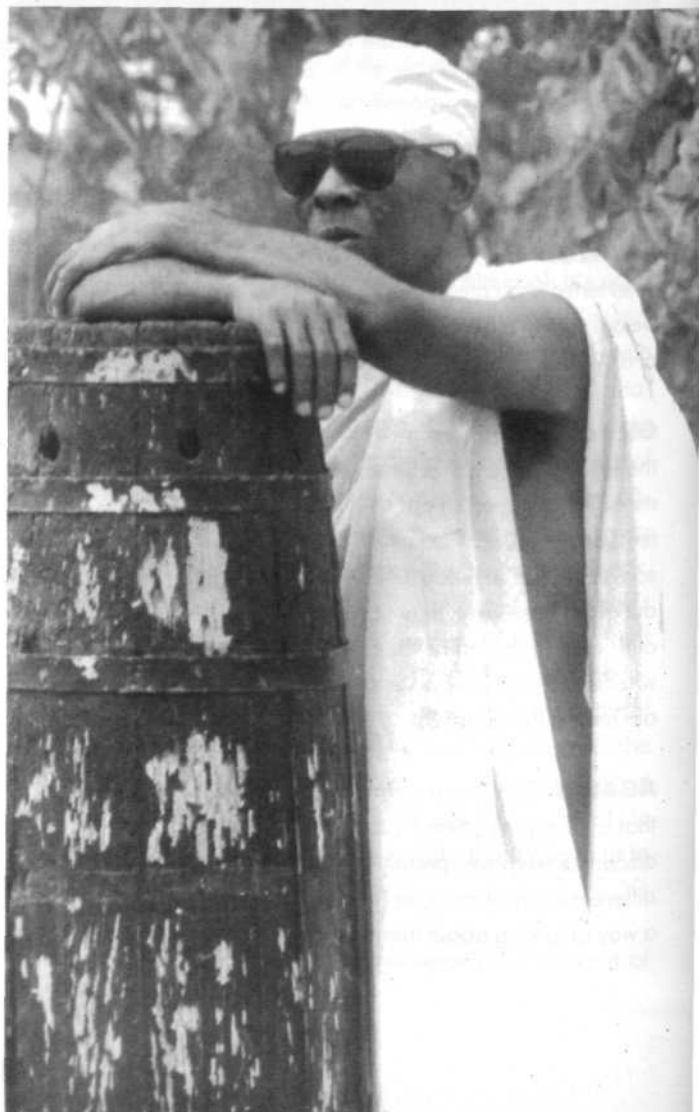
observed the kind of things that they did. I think that our policy makers, people who draw up our syllabi and so on might have been working with a fairly short term goal when they set up some of the things that we have inherited now as music education. Some of these may be or may not be their fault, and it could be a little bit alarming to say that there is a crisis, because it is a crisis that has endured for a while. It's no worse now, I would say, than it was 20 to 25 years ago. Some of these arise as a very specific product of colonial thinking and colonial education. And so, the idea that you will come to the University of Ghana and be studying European music and that, somehow, special space has to be made for you to study some African music sounds somewhat strange. But it is not strange in the context of what colonialism produced in terms of African minds and, above all, we were told what we needed to do to prove ourselves. But you see, there is a funny constraint on education: I believe you can put people through some exercises - musical exercises, mental exercises and that those will then strengthen the intellect or strengthen a sort of musical ability. But what almost breaks my heart is the recognition of the incredible richness, pedagogically speaking, and potentials of the various things in our traditions that I easily imagine can be incorporated into our curriculum. I mean an intelligently designed curriculum that is entirely African, of which the European thing is smuggled in as an exotic Other. In other words, it would basically reverse what we are used to.

There is no reason why, in the area of rhythm, if we are doing comparative rhythm studies, for example, on this vast continent, we could not give a three-year-course on African rhythm consistently. And if we design this well, and we have instruments which express listening assignment of various sources, we could be flying, you know. However, to do that we've got to move beyond our confines: I am Ewe, then I should know about the Gaa tradition, I should move across and also learn about the Yoruba tradition. I should go over and learn something about the Luo tradition, so that we can begin to consolidate these resources and put it in the work and be convinced about it; to see that, in fact, a lot of our proper development, musically, lies in investing, in pulling these resources together. I think that is a challenge that, perhaps, not too many of us have the courage to meet.

I remember once taking on one of our professors on the issue of tonal versus atonal, and I said, "well, you write this simple harmony; that it sounds like hymns, yet there are alternatives to simple four-part fictional

harmonies; and how do you consider music, maybe something else, something based on the traditional model, maybe something a little more dissonant and so on?" And he answered my question by saying, "Oh, that kind of anxiety is displayed by those of you who studied Western music," and completely dismissed the thing. I carved a polar choice in Western music, but boy, when I came back and knew that this is the dead signal I hear in ...or Ho Hoi do their thing and he wants me to go back to the same world, and I say no, no. I don't see how I can do that. So, yes I think there are a number of us who may be lack depth of understanding of our own cultures and who, therefore do not see, or at least underestimate their pedagogical potentials. Now, this is going to take a while; it is not something you can do overnight. And also, it is something that calls for collaboration, which is one of the things that I lament: the fact that there is no communal spirit that would enable us, not to agree, but at least to be able to discuss things, find things out and reshape our view as a result of what someone else has said and so on. That, we seem to be missing. And to kill that

Kofi Ghanaba(Guy Warren) Accra, Ghana, © Tam Fiofori, 1980



spirit, really, I think is to kill African society, to kill our intellectual life. Although a handful of us can seem to be able to do what we are doing, you see, how much stronger we can be, if we are able to fashion communally! I just don't see that communality in our sort of thinking on music education; across institutions, I mean, I see so much individual work that basically replicates the same nodes.

GR: I want to link that note to one of the themes that came out of the seminar yesterday, which is about knowledge production and the construction of African music. In that light: do you think the very notion of decolonization of discourse is applicable to African music and, if so, in what sense is it so?

AGAWU: Absolutely, it is the first order of business. That is what we should look at. Whether we end up calling it decolonization of discourse or something else, but we certainly need to look with radical scepticism at what has been written about African music. This is, something that people in other fields, as you pointed out, do or have done quite routinely. People in literature know about this, philosophers have vigorous arguments about African philosophy, for example, what is it? What about ethno-philosophy, what about sage philosophy? All of these things. Mudimbe has written about Hountondji, Wiredu, and others you know, in a very lively debate. I don't see that among African musicologists yet, or I don't see that among people writing about African music rhythm. I made a point which I meant to sound polemical about when I said that, I see this book as a contribution to the body of African music, rather than to ethnomusicology. And I did that because I want to distance myself from ethnomusicologists, as I do not want to inherit their disciplinary constraints.

So, the first problem with the order of discourse is that it is controlled by people who call themselves ethnomusicologists. Now, of course, I have to make exceptions for everything that I say because someone is going to cite an ethnomusicologist who doesn't do any of the bad things that I say ethnomusicologists do. Anyway, that's one of the difficulties there. But in a way, it is ironic that we should be talking about language, and about music, because music in a way writes itself at a certain level. You see, unlike philosophers who use language to generate concepts and so on, for us, it is at a primary level that we are pushing tones round, making relations, dealing with voice and so on.

In a way, the challenge for us is dual. First of all, to find a language that can talk about the musical substance itself, the musical processes, the musical expressions, and then to find a language that is devoid of some of the prejudices that the institution of ethnomusicology has handed to us. It is almost like a two-level thing, a kind of technical, scientific language, and then a language that has more explicitly political charge.

I feel that if we talk about specific writings on African music, one could see just where some of the problems of the discourse are. Yet, broadly speaking, I think it's fair to say that the discourse needs to be decolonized. Having said that though, I need to say that I have been talking as if, ethnomusicological discourse is unified, some homogenous discourse; it is in some ways a little more heterogeneous than it would seem. And I must say that I'm constantly appalled by the fact that an ethnomusicologist working in, say, Central African Republic would read stuff written about Central African Republic, and about Harone, then she might go back and read Rose Bandell's 1961 book on the music of Central Africa, and quickly slam her because she did not do field work. The ethnomusicologist would read a little around and then link up with something they call ethnomusicological theory on a high level! In this way, ethnomusicologists, are not linking up horizontally. They are not interested in what happens among the northern Ewe, they don't really want to go to Gambia to find out what is going on there, they are not interested in the Islamic areas, for example, unless somebody comes along, like Eric Chale, to work on these areas. So, you simply link up to European theory, you see. This is deeply problematic because the European theory you are talking about is also the product of a certain observation of things on the African continent presumably, and yet it is being elevated to some very special and privileged unit. So, that's part of the problem I see with African musicological discourse, and that is why if one is interested in Africa, if one's ultimate interest is in Africa, then I think the most horizontal extension is a more productive thing and, in fact, I think one should not be an extreme musicologist if I may go that far.

GR: We've been talking about colonization and maybe we should come to some specific musical traditions now. Highlife music is a product of colonization, as I see it. I don't know how difficult it is going to be for us to assess the socio-cultural values that highlife repre-

sents. In Ghana, I see a kind of interpretation of highlife music that has even influenced some traditional musicians, some popular musicians and, as we saw just now, even art music composers. How would you assess the impact or significance of highlife in Ghanaian music both musically and extra-musically?

AGAWU: Hmm...well, that's a tricky question because we first of all have to make the kind of primary distinction between opportunities presented to one in the form of, maybe, materials and the kind of creativity that then flows from manipulating these materials. Now, yes you're absolutely right that highlife is unthinkable outside the history of earlier European presence in Africa. That is, highlife as we've known it; in other words, the kinds of instruments that are used, the core sequences that are followed and then later on, of course, some of the jazz influence that you get in the big bands and E.T Mensah's style; for example, you can hear Armstrong in some of the kinds of solos that Mensah writes. If you follow the history of highlife, the kind of influences that it accepted, used, discarded and so on, you're dealing with what some people used to call a syncretic tradition. I am not bothered about the fact that people are influenced by the foreign; I don't see how you can't be anyway, but the thing is when you accept an influence from elsewhere, how do you then use it? I feel that highlife, actually, is never reducible to European music.

There is no way that you can say if you take out the European elements in the music, you don't have anything left. In fact, you find a very steady core of linguistic expression which harbours moral values; you have a core of a kind of musical sensibility, a sort of play, sometimes a teasing quality that you find in some of the compositional things that are placed between instruments. There is quite a bit of highlife that is irreducibly African, no matter whether one is using a trumpet or not. Now, I don't mean it in an essentialist way. I just mean that in the hands of a trumpeter like E.T Mensah, a certain way of being creative comes across; we hear it and delight in it, and you know we respond to it.

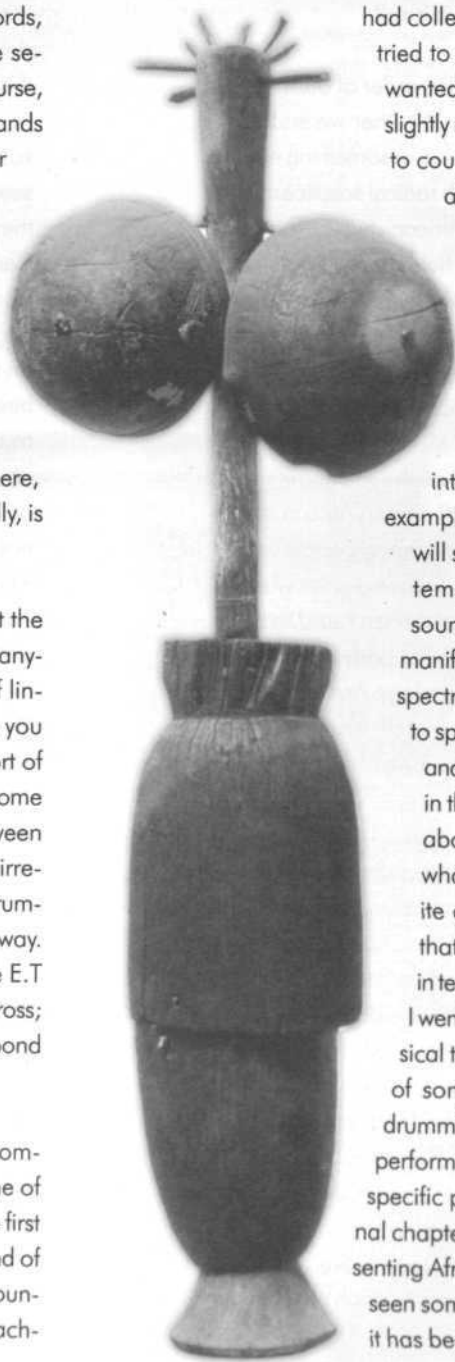
GR: I want us to link the whole politics and economics of knowledge production to the fact that some of us were seeing your book [*African Rhythm*] for the first time yesterday, or two days ago, and that's the kind of problem and crisis of knowledge production encountered in Nigeria, and in Africa. As an African teach-

ing abroad, do you feel this tension, this crisis for Africa. Second, would you like to say one or two things about what you are trying to do in the book?

AGAWU: I could actually try to take the second part of your question first. *African Rhythm* was published in 1995 by Cambridge University Press. When I finished the manuscript, I sent it to Cambridge University Press because I was looking for a prestigious press. But to be frank by publishing the book it was not then clear to me that they were going to be charging about \$69-\$70 for it, partly because the book is published with a CD. But I wrote the book based on what I know

about African music, mainly about the northern Ewe tradition and also from materials that I had collected essentially in 1986. What I tried to do in the book is very simple: I wanted to talk about rhythm, but in a slightly more expanded way. I didn't want to count beats or talk about meters or about, you know, all these attitudes that we're talking about.

I thought if you think of rhythm from the northern Ewe perspective, which is the center of the book, you will see that rhythm is one of the connected things – it leads you into other areas, you know. So, for example, if you look at the book, you will see that the opening chapter attempts to create some kind of soundscape, where I'm listening to manifestations of rhythm across a wide spectrum of activities, from pounding to speaking, to proper musical things and so on. Then I narrowed the work in the following chapters and talked about the rhythms of language in what is, actually, one of my favourite chapters because it is the area that I did not know so much about, in terms of the form of language. Then I went on to do the more properly musical things: I talked about the rhythm of songs, the rhythm of dance and drumming; I talked about the rhythm of performance. And, well, I analyzed one specific performance and, then did a final chapter in which I talked about representing African rhythm. You probably have seen some of the reviews of the book, as it has been fairly widely received. I have



tried to make a contribution towards expanding the domain of rhythm and getting it out, away from a strict mechanistic model to something a little more humane, I think, without denying its mechanism. In other words, when I come to talk about beats, I want to do it in as rigorous a fashion as the most hardened structuralist.

As for the circulation of knowledge, its just basic economics. There are not many libraries that have seen it; it is difficult, in Ghana, to readily pick up a book on academic music on Africa rhythm and pay \$70, when there are many other things to do. So that's just a very simple economic constraint. I know that libraries in America have all bought this book, I mean most libraries, but you know its part of the budget that we work with here. . When I published the book, I bought a number of copies personally, but you can appreciate the fact that even as the author, I only have a 40% discount, so I could spare about \$500 for buying a number of copies which I gave out either to libraries or to individuals that I thought would find them beneficial to themselves, and then to their students. I didn't know that you would have liked one, otherwise I would have spared you the expenses of this; it's really wicked, so that's the level of it. But I think we are all aware that there are many constraints to the spread of knowledge across the African continent. Some of these come from language French-speaking and English-speaking divides, and the fact that we don't read what is produced in Ivory Coast, sometimes in Zaire, is rather unfortunate, and unless you are in a situation where you are forced to learn French or any of the other languages.

Sometimes we end up reinventing wheels, which is a structural problem we would have to contend with. But even beyond that, from our individual localities, again, it's not clear that we are all burning with the desire to reach across other localities. I think one of the things that we have to live with, partly as a colonial heritage, is the fences that have been erected around us. I am particularly sensitive to this because I live in USA and see people migrating just anywhere they want to, you know. They're just sort of floating in the space. Now, I'm not saying that's a better alternative to those of us who are sort of grounded to a hometown where we return. But I think it calls for some intelligent negotiation about between acknowledging one's root and origin as a positive thing and then being able to dispense with this at the moment in which there is a greater call. That's the challenge.

GR: Finally, what would you say, as a parting shot, about the present state of African music.

AGAWU: (Laughs) I'll be brief here, ...you mean the actual musical production that are circulating?

GR: Yes

AGAWU: Hmm... I hope that African music would continue to rise in the location in which it has pertinence and meaning for its makers. I don't know how I can actually give you a single assessment of the entire state of African music. I'm also hesitant to do so because I get a lot of information while living in US and am aware that there have been a series of mediations there that one really has to look at very critically. So, even though I actually enjoy the music at some point, my enjoyment is spoilt by the fact that too many white people enjoy it. I'm bothered by the basis of their enjoyment and would like to know more about that. So, once you start to allow your aesthetic response to be politicized, or at least to be affected by some of these issues, then really, you'll be making life very difficult for yourself. It would have been alright to just say oh, "Lady Smith sing beautifully. I went there to hear them sing, Paulina and I had a nice nostalgic evening," but for me it's bothersome. I could go on and a little bit narrower but I won't now. Just to say that the way we gather our information, the things that we are told about Africa; whether in the news media or what we read in books and so on, all have to be looked at very carefully. And finally I would say, its not that we should all do that twenty-four hours a day. I've never felt that this kind of intense interrogation is everyone's call, personally I look for a handful of people who are bothered by the same kind of issues, and the same kind of problematic, who can then encourage me or discourage me as they go along.

I think if enough of us are thinking in these terms, and we do not allow representations to be constructed for us, this may be our only chance of saving something of the authentic African experience, mind and creativity.

GR: Thank you.