TOWARDS CONSCIOUS PATRIOTISM
Art Music as a Catalyst for National Cohesion and Growth

- AWAKE OOO! ALKEBULAN’S GHANA
- GHANA: YÊ! HIA AYARESA!

BY VICTOR NII SOWA MANIESON
FOREWARD BY PROF. YAW SEKYI-BAIDOO
Towards Conscious Patriotism

Art Music as a Catalyst for National Cohesion and Growth

By Victor Nii Sowa Manieson
DEDICATION

Towards Conscious Patriotism – Art music as a catalyst for National Cohesion and Growth is dedicated to ALKEBULAN’S GHANA.

(A call to our Divine Essence)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The weight of the book regarding conscious patriotism required delicate musical and textual constructs, which also demanded thorough in-depth reflection, truth to self, God and country. Many of my colleagues and choristers whose views resonated with my posture of using ‘Art Music as a catalyst for National Cohesion and Growth’ have on many occasions found subtle ways of enquiring when this book/work will be ready. It is ready now!

I am grateful to all within my circle who directly or indirectly encouraged me.

The following however had their ways of triggering my CREATIVE IMPULSES – the face to face conversation here and there, long-distance calls, their language dissection, scrutiny and colloquial inferences among others nourished my musicality.

1. Doreen Thomas Manieson – Impressario
2. Pastor Charles A. Appiah – Impressario
3. Osofo Kwasi Atta – Impressario
4. Pastor Demay Alabi – Impressario
5. Rev. Prof. Femi Adedeji – Impressario
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20. Rev. Dr. Colleen Amuaben – Nzema
22. Esther Ewineyam Asore – Moore (Mossi’s)
23. Christiana Aba Tigah – Moore (Mossi’s)
24. Opanyin Samuel Offei – Twi (Akuapem)
25. Christian Ofori Boateng – Twi (Akuapem)
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Notation Transcriptions & Front Cover Design

Kwaku Boakye-Frempong

Special Thanks

Special thanks to my special research assistant, Maestro Kwaku Boakye-Frempong, for your diligence, encouragement and professionalism in contributing to this project which has taken two years to complete.
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Reflecting on Nkunim’s choice of Art Music as the medium to contribute to the discourse for the renewal of ourselves as Ghanaians, Africans and people of one big Globe, my mind points not only to the depth of the endeavour the composer has taken upon himself, but also to his own depth as a musician and thinker.

One such consideration is the **choice of message**. There are messages and themes which audiences wish to hear, and which they feel gratified in, and artists often exploit such ideations to instantly or easily reap the attention of patrons and the acceptance of their art. Choral music in Ghana, and many parts of the world, is largely Christian in content, and when it comes to patriotism and related concepts, the normal is patriotism. But in actual fact, patriotic songs, calling citizens to unity and hard work, mean and achieve little if the minds of the audience are not already effect on already tuned to national building and effective citizenship. And this is what has happened with the numerous patriotic songs that have been just filling the airspace on patriotic things as expected on Independence Day etc.

*But this is what Manieson departs from – not just to satisfy the expectations of celebration – but to use music as a way of causing real change to the mind that receives the patriotic songs, and to help set the minds to a fundamental change in attitude, philosophy or mindset, and behaviour.*

Another decision Nkunim Manieson makes, which calls for attention, is the choice of **music** itself - not drama, not speech, not photography etc. Music is known to have a mystic and spiritual force; it promotes easy memory and recollection, and it attacks and reaches us from different aspects of its experience - the melody, harmony, rhythm, instrumental sounds and lyrics, each of which carries a brilliance and productivity that both fills and makes one hungry at once! These resources have been harnessed in the compositions to such explosive and captivating beauty and instruction - in their
individual identities as well as their intricate combinations...all within such dynamism and grace....and with such freshness.

Nkunim, in these songs, departs from the predictability of melody, harmony, movement, and rhythm that one would hear every day and settles on a kind so unique and enduring, which also symbolizes the enduring beauty of the unity, prosperity and grace, which the music seeks to induct us all into.

I am glad Nkunim was not attracted by the popularity, fame and wealth which these energies, channelled into different kinds of music, would bring. Surprisingly, he decides ‘to pray for the peace of Jerusalem’ and to strive for prosperity in its palaces and walls with music, in a genre so full of sacrifice.

I pray that the music attains its vision of a better society, and may the attraction of each person to the ideals that would prosper our society reflect boundless blessings and peace to Nkunim Manieson, his groups of performers and his patrons, and all through whom this vision leaves his yearning and restless mind to the generations of his audience and critics.

By Prof Yaw Sekyi- Baidoo
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Dec 2023
Music has always impacted us. Whether it serves as coded information, therapy, social or political enhancer, cultural storage, means of worship, frontline in church settings, source of entertainment or any of its countless roles or uses. Surely, music has made a significant impact on society. Nonetheless, Ghanaian society, and indeed several other societies, appears to underestimate the potent abilities of music in shaping the orientation of culture and society. This assessment is based on my observations as a music educator, composer, church musician etc. and in my interactions with some experienced musicians and lovers of different kinds of music in Ghana and foreign lands. My conclusions are based also on observations from activities and comments of politicians, government officials, church leaders, journalists and the general public in relation to music.

In following the esteemed legacies of those I consider mentors from home and abroad, I realize that most of them often had to affirm and validate themselves in defense of their gifts and artistry. However, their constructive innovative thinking, their musical productions and their honour recognition in their communities and the world at large have helped to change social and political orientations in their communities, countries and the wider world. We can all appreciate how the message and art of Bob Marley, Mariam Makeba, Ephraim Amu, Hugh Masakela, Duke Ellington etc. influenced societal thought and behavior, in all these instances, the musical and artistic endeavors are appreciated across continents and even in most of the countries we call “advanced”. In many societies, conscious attention is given to music and musicians both for the enjoyment of their artistry and for their influence on the psyche of society. Ghana's case seems quite different. The Ghanaian society seems to pay attention basically to the enjoyment of the artistry of music and ignoring the importance of the
artistic choices, the organization of music and the message content as a vehicle for liberation.

RELIGION, POLITICS AND ECONOMIC considerations often sometimes compel many practitioners of music in Ghana and other societies to compromise their standards, pandering to what society might find easy, interesting or acceptable, rather than what would help in directing and strengthening society. This might serve, but shortly, for what carries artistic works into the future is not their ease or acceptability, which is only seasonal, but the strength of their content and style.

Thus, while there are many types of musical genres in which I can engage, I have chosen as a music educator and composer to follow not the path of politics, commerce and religion, but the unpopular path of Art Music and to employ it as a resource for social growth and national cohesion. Art music, I admit, is deemed not popular nor economically rewarding. The Art Music path would often require committed careful and discerning listeners, who have a passion not for themselves and their everyday emotional enjoyment, but for the liberation and cohesion of society.

Our national political culture and leadership as well as the global political culture have often compromised truth, the proper and the moral, with attention to what glorifies and satisfies the selfish interests of people who have authority, wealth and power rather than the morality, unity and prosperity of society. Selfishness, dishonesty and divisiveness have become the norm for the unsuspecting child. Ghana, my beloved country, seems to have mastered the intrigues and nuances of a phenomenon that is dividing us instead of celebrating the positive creativities of our collectives.

Nature has an intriguing way of championing TRUTH over lies and authenticity over ambition, and societies that ignore Truth often see destruction. I seek, therefore, through music, to help reposition Truth as a central part of our thoughts and values,
with the trust that the regeneration of Truth will breathe the needed strength, direction and purpose in our personal, social, professional and political endeavours.

Diasporic Africans are also included in my listening audience. This model of music utilization can be a prototype for global consumption beyond Ghanaian identity and cross-cultural pluralism. I believe there are many others of the human race whose genuine inquisitiveness will cause them to understand, appreciate and accommodate what Ghanaian Art Musicians can contribute to the world's creative pool.

In many ways the slogans of global village, international diplomacy/race relations, cultural cohesion, collective consciousness, cultural pluralism, parallels of the creation story, and cultural interdependency, all seem to have been corrupted by selfishness, intolerance and wickedness and invariably nourished by tools described as propaganda machinery, denominational supremacy, religious intolerance, competitive edge, purity of race or tribe in the promotion politics, religion, business & jurisprudence.

While some of us continue to hold on to our cultural traumas and pains caused by domestic and international policies, others have also observed enough to devise strategies which can help to reconstruct the morality of our culture to the benefit of humanity. Being Christian, I had hoped that our churches would help to nourish the holistic healing needed for the nation. However, I no longer hold optimism for that hope. Gladly, there are broader and deeper divine creations beyond the structures of the institutional church, with wealth and strength which is infinite and universal, and this is what I turn to in helping to reconstruct our social and moral psyche.

I have the gift of writing and composing music. By embracing the universality of music as a language, the potency of its sonospheric effects and its ability to penetrate the corridors of the soul in subtle as well as profound ways, I have chosen to share my work **TOWARDS CONSCIOUS PATRIOTISM** using the medium of music.
In this regard, I deliberately do not choose to follow mainstream compositional constructs. I occasionally challenge the mind of the conscious listener, similar to the patience and attention required of a surgeon whose physical presence, emotional equilibrium along with skills and faith in precision are needed in matters of life and death. This process requires Truth to self, society and the Creator. It makes possible the healing and liberation we need at this time.

I pull from my booklet **COME LET US REASON TOGETHER**, a *poetic prose* I wrote some time ago entitled “Anatomy of Dondology.”

**ANATOMY OF DONDOLOGY**

This piece attempts to recollect the African thought concepts exemplified in music and other performing arts in our institutions of higher learning, which were met with resistance. I anticipated that when enacted as a choreographed piece with the poetry in background and the interface with music, our consciences will confront us and demand of us to embrace the limitless resources that enhance the evolving of lives and constructively structure Truth and Oneness in culture, society and relationships.


Anatomy of Dondology

--------------------------------------
1. We find ourselves placed here
A place “they” call Africa
And wonder - why here
Bestowed unto us in this Africa
Are talents, skills and abilities that
We often take for granted.
Endowed in this Africa - we find Ghana,
A place similar to other places in Africa
Where talents and gifts are often taken for granted.
Yet we ask, and Wonder - and we search, and ponder
Is Africa part of God’s plan of salvation?
If God is God
Will he plan to defeat himself?

2. Here then is an unbalanced scale we have come to believe
We have told ourselves
‘Not all gifts from God are good’
And in the same breath, act as chameleons.
We pontificate religiously and say
‘All God did was good’
Yet lack the courage to embrace the
Expressions that have so Richly,
Capsulized our culture.
If God is God,
Will he plan to defeat himself?

3. Capsulized in this Ghana
Is what we may call;
Multi ethnic, intricate rhythmic patterns,
Tonal and atonal languages and more…
Engulfed in this country, so rich with different kingdoms
Are diverse expressions coded
Codes that need decoding by our highest of institutions - Universities
Yet, by the mention of the thoughts of
Understanding the secrets of
The vehicles that so much embodies our rich history,
Mockery, became the Apex of hospitality received.
If God is God
Will he plan to defeat Himself?
4. For far too long have we denounced the
Potency of these vehicles?
You may ask - what are these vehicles?
You may also and even, flirt with the idea
How may our history be preserved and sustained?
Need I tell you?
Sophisticated within our drums
Sophisticated within our dances
Sophisticated within our names
Sophisticated within our gestures and symbols
Hidden before the beginning of times were we so blessed.
Go to that which you mock
And seek wisdom
If God is God
He will surely make a way.

In conclusion, the time is now for the frequency and resonance that nourishes our
consciences beyond just surviving into thriving. **TOWARDS CONSCIOUS PATRIOTISM: Art Music as Catalyst for National Cohesion and Growth** is a creation that challenges a nation to bold introspection, demanding and requiring of itself an Awakening. The work has two main vocal solo pieces with piano accompaniment. These two extended pieces are sandwiched between two short pieces serving as PRELUDE & POSTLUDE. These placements are not mere formalities of artistic constructs for this work. They are a framework reflecting Traditional Ghanaian cultural values, where one’s approach to the elders requires language symbolism, and allegorical exigencies with literal gleanings only as introductory or preliminary presence. The traditional African Knowledge System as an art form prepares the path to the main matter. Although it may seem like a dying tradition, I perceive its resurgence in many ways. Oftentimes, modernity
seems to forget that it was borne out of trusted tradition through many generations and manifestations. Perhaps, we lack the vocabulary to adequately describe this ethereal reality that has appealed to our other senses and Truth. This work beckons us to celebrate the positive attributes of our mutual coexistence and evolutionary growth.

* The two (2) main songs intend to help meet the objectives of this book are:

* **Main Song 1. AWAKE OOO! ALKEBULAN'S GHANA**

Knowing what the word Alkebulan is and/or represents and understanding how far some of her children of today’s Ghana have evolved calls for a new vision. It exposes a frequency and resonance that, when injected into the sonosphere, will cause the emergence of a Paradigm Shift in the energy and evolution of Ghanaians. This Paradigm Shift will affirm and accentuate positive possibilities for Ghanaians society and culture. This title for the first main song therefore suggests that some elements are impeding Ghana's positive perceptive development. Perhaps, it has become lethargic and contaminated in spirit. The song calls for an Awakening.

I selected six (6) of Ghana's many languages [Twi, Ewe, Kasem, Dangme, Hausa, Nzema] and tasked them with this exercise. Within reason, the piano accompaniment is intentionally crafted to be different from the mainstream styles of music.

* **Main Song 2.**

**GHANA: YEHIA AYARESA! (To wit, Ghana: We need Healing)**

This song examines the root causes of problems in Ghana and prescribes some antidotes.

To not be at ease with oneself is to feel that something is wrong. Knowing the cause or root of the disease implies there was a search or finding resulting in greater knowledge. Oftentimes, when the grass looks greener somewhere else, it is assumed that that ‘somewhere’ has all the answers. However, all nations are capable of transforming themselves given that God is a wise architect and loves us when we
make use of the life resources for the enhancement of greater life. Not being in alignment with the spiritual, embracing untruth, and lacking knowledge and consciousness of what destroys us is to be vulnerable – which we are!

Furthermore, the song laments how most of our statesmen, politicians, religious leaders, cultural spokespersons, and influential citizens with whom we have entrusted our nation keep promulgating lies instead of speaking Truth for our liberation. Confessing our shortcomings, acknowledging the need for correction and the courage to live Truth is our medicine for healing, thriving and evolution.

The song is written in the Akan (Twi) language which is spoken by the majority of Ghanaians. Piano accompaniment is intentionally structured in a style calling forth enlightenment and change.

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PRELUDE: Africology Etude Reprise is actually a vocal study piece. It is a duet set in the Twi language with the Title "HU YƐN MƐBƐ”, to wit, ‘Have mercy upon us’. The piece begins with the phrase "ntease ye aduro" meaning “UNDERSTANDING IS MEDICINAL!”

The middle section focuses on the frailty of man. It alerts us to be both aware of others and ourselves. This song ends with a recapitulation of how understanding one another, in the spirit of the Divine, limitless spirit-creation, is medicinal, helping us to untie, untangle and dismantle the confusion that would see us separate. It calls us to imagine and see ourselves as One connected to all of life.

POSTLUDE:

TUMI WURA -AMEN! (to wit, Almighty God --Amen!)

A resolve! The song accentuates the expanse of God's love. It appeals for mercy. It beckons for clarity of purpose. The song calls for God's Spirit to lead us. Aaamen! The song adopts the attitude typical of some Praise Singers of our Chiefs’ Courts (the
Griots) This closing part of the book is in four-part harmony, poised for a quartet or a choir. It respectfully echoes the submission of the Griots and acknowledges TUMI WURA – AAMEN (ALL POWERFUL, ALL KNOWING), “O, Thou fount of every blessing…May it be so.” It is a codetta. Then there is a Yoruba adaptation following the original Akan. This artistic addendum is deliberate, extending a plea to God - basically inviting the Creator to remember Ghana’s siblings in Nigeria and all of Africa.

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Philadelphia PA
Dec 2023
AFRICOGOLOGY ETUDE REPRISE

Inspired by and dedicated to Alberta Opatu (Member of Greater Accra Mass Choir & La Emmanuel Methodist Choir)

Victor Manieson
28th October, 2021
Accra

Score

Moderato

Notated by KWAKU BOAKYE-FRMPONG, Lyra Art Music Studio
AFRICOLOGY ETUDE REPRISE

S

T

Pno.

S

T

Pno.

S

T

Pno.
AWAKE OO - ALKEBULAN'S GHANA

Nezma Language

54

S

Pno.

Mi va Mi va

Nya me le me ye wo ko de hoo

Pno.

Yen nwu nu e ho e dzi i ye

ku a ho la zu

Pno.

Ao na vi nye mi va na vi nye

Pno.

du tuu

Na vi nye, Na vi nye du tuu, du tuu, Na vi nye du tuu

Pno.
GHANA: YE HIA AYARE SA

so de da yen so

A man a man fo fro e hu Gha na N hyi ra be bre be,

N hyi ra be bre be Nan so yen de yen hu hwee ye hia ya re so o

Ye hia a ya re sa
GHANA: YE HIA AYARE SA

Pno.

134
bi ri bi pa be si yie

134

Pno.

140
be si yie be si yie Ye ari e so ro nyan sa, ye ari e so ro

140

Pno.

145
nyan sa ɔ so ro nyan sa ma yen pa nyin fo ɔ so ro nyan sa

145

Pno.

152
e be si yie e be si yie

152

rit.
GHANA: YE HIA AYARE SA

Pno.

165

170

be si yie be si yie

ye sre s ro nyan sa,

ye sre s ro nyan sa

Pno.

176

c so ro nyan sa e be si yie e be si yie e
GHANA: YE HIA AYARE SA

be si yi e e be si yi e me nua me nua
GHANA: YE HIA AYARE SA

En ti nnon pe a kwo kwa yi be'gya nkwa?

Yiw, e yea mpa se. O nyan ko pön a wem fo bi nom a gyaw wun. Nya me nnya ma ne wun a dewen hō, nan so wun a. Kā wō hō no re ye. Nya mea dwu ma no Na se nea nnon pe a kwo kwa nyaa n kwa no saa a ra. Na O nyan ko pön de ə man.
A Sight Singing "Buffet-Cafe"
Tumi Wura - Aamen!

Dedicated to Greater Accra Mass Choir

Victor Manieson
1st June, 2021

Andante \( \frac{\text{d}}{\text{e}} = 70 \)

1. Tu mi wuraa
   Wa dom do soo
   Tu mi wura ei
   Hu hen mo

2. A-la-gba-ra
   O-lo-reo-fe
   A-la-gba-ra
   Sa-nu fun

bor e ky so
Nya me, kyere hen,
Dzi hen kan
Ma wo sum sum

wa O lu pe se wa
Ko ko si to wa
I na E mi

kron kron
No mu gyan,
Tu mi wu raa,
Wa dom do soo,
Dzi hen kan,

Mi mo so wa ji
A la gba ra
O lo reo fe
To o wa

Notated by KWAKU BOAKYE-FREMPONG - Lyra Art Music Studio,
Yoruba Translation by ASOMDWEEL WALTON
A Sight Singing "Buffet-Cafe"
Tumi Wura - Aamen!
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Victor Nkunim Nii Sowa Manieson is a music education theorist, ethnomusicologist, composer, professional pianist and performer who is committed to Afrikan Liberation and National Pride.

He graduated from the National Academy of Music (NAM), now the Music Department of The University of Education, in Winneba, Ghana. He received his Masters from San Diego State University’s School of Music and Dance, in the United States. He also attended Clark-Atlanta University where he took some doctoral classes in the Humanities.

Over the years, Manieson has served in different capacities as an educational trainer, vocal coach, piano accompanist and Minister of Music. Most notably he taught at Lincoln Community School (Accra), and as an adjunct Lecturer at University of Education. Currently, he is the Musician/Artist in Residence at Spring Garden Academy/Resurrection Life Church in Philadelphia.

Manieson’s work continues in the esteemed legacies of Dr. E. Amu, Professor K. Nketia, Reverend Professor James Cone, Professor Howard Thurman, Rev. Professor Femi Adededji, Mariam Makeba, Hugh Masekela, Dr. Arikana Quao and many other conscious leaders. He believes churches and institutes of higher learning must unapologetically articulate the positives and highlight truths about Africa. This mission should include music as a catalyst to reconcile historical and cultural traumas to facilitate healing.

Victor Manieson’s current focus as a Conscious Cultural Healing Arts Practitioner is to use Choral Music to shape, orient, and advocate for African liberation.

He is married to Doreen Thomas-Manieson and they have two children.