

Course Title: African Popular Music
Course Number: V18.9122
Instructor: COLLINS, John
Activity Type: Lecture
Credit Hours: 4
Semester: Fall

Course Description:

Using a variety of paradigms, this course explores a broad range of popular musical forms in sub-Saharan Africa as stylistic areas. Southern, Central, East and West Africa (Francophone and Anglophone) musical styles are considered. The historical scope of the inquiry extends from 19th century to the present. The investigation seeks to highlight the relationships among popular music, traditional performance, and the social and cultural forces of modernization.

GRADING BASED ON: Class participation 15%, seminar paper 35%; class tests/exams 50%

SEMINAR PAPER During the semester students are expected to work on a seminar paper and presentation. For this they will be encouraged to do some original research and work with Ghanaian artists, local music associations, unions and copyright bodies or local music archives. Prof Collins can put his students in touch with these individuals, bands and bodies. He will also occasionally suggest music programs that might be of interest to the students.

Week 1: INTRODUCTION.

General overview of sub-Saharan African popular music. The rest of the course will focus mainly on Anglophone West Africa and particularly Ghana

Week 2: NATURE OF TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MUSIC

The importance of recreational music for the emergence of popular music - and neo-traditional forms in Ghana: such as Ga kpanlogo drumming and Ewe Borborbor music.

Week 3: VIDEOS AND DISCUSSION

Three/four videos on Ghanaian traditional and popular music, and the local concert party

Week 4: PRACTICAL PERCUSSION CLASS

Practical class on traditional rhythms

Week 5: GOOMBAY: WEST AFRICA'S FIRST POPULAR TRANSCULTURAL MUSIC

Spread of Maroon Jamaican/Caribbean goombay frame drum music to West Africa via Sierra Leone from 1800. Links to migrant workers movements. Ghana regional developments of goombay; Akan konkoma, Ga gome music, 1930's Simpa music of Dagbon and the use of the gome by Ga 'cultural groups of the 1970's (Wulomei etc)

Week 6: HIGHLIFE AND BRASS BANDS.

The emergence of brass band 'adaha' highlife music in Cape Coast/El Mina from the 1880's. The importance on it of West Indian soldiers stationed in Ghana from 1870. Adaha offshoots - such as konkoma highlife. Comparison of the development of adaha and American jazz

Week 7: MARITIME INFLUENCE ON EARLY GUITAR/ACCORDION MUSIC

Importance of visiting Liberian Kru seamen. Fanti Osibisaaba. The first Highlife recordings (1927/8). The Yaa Amponsah and Odonson (Akan 'blues') varieties of rural 'palmwine' highlife. Nigerian 'native blues', juju music and the maringa of Sierra Leone. Recent revivals Ghana's Koo Nimo and Freetown's S.E. Rogie.

Week 8: HIGH-CLASS DANCE ORCHESTRAS.

Local Ghanaian elite ballroom orchestras from 1914 to the 1940s. The origin of term 'Highlife' (i.e. high-class life). The link between local dance orchestras and imported vaudeville shows 1950's swing-jazz influenced highlife dance-bands and the impact of World War Two. E.T Mensah Tempos. Kofi Ghanaba's introduction of Afro-Cuban percussion, the Tempos employment of the first professional female stage performers. King Bruce's Black Beats and other pioneering Ghanaian and Nigerian highlife bands - their role in the PanAfrican/independence movement .

Week 9: VIDEOS AND DISCUSSION

Three/four videos on Ghanaian highlife music, brass band music and the local music industry.

Week 10: THE CONCERT PARTY.

Overview of this local Ghanaian comic opera from 1900 to the present. Early vaudeville shows and their indigenisation during the 1930's. Post Second World War developments. The Jaguar Jokers Concert Party. The use of guitar-band highlife music by concert parties. The crucial role in this of E.K. Nyame. The emergence of concert party actresses from the 1960's.

Week 11: AFRO-FUSION MUSIC OF THE 1970'S.

Emergence of musical blends created by highlife musicians influenced by black diasporic jazz, soul and rock 'n' roll (i.e. black R&B) and reggae. The Afro-jazz of Kofi Ghanaba (Guy Warren), the Afro-beat of Nigeria's Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, Osibisa's Afro-rock and the influence of West Indian Reggae on Nigerian and Ghanaian artists.

Week 12: COLLAPSE OF THE GHANAIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY

Late 1970's to 1980's. Economic and political causes: political corruption in the late 1970's, military coups, night curfews, a musical 'brain drain', the imposition of luxury import duties on musical instruments, the demotion of music in the education system. The formation of musicians unions.

Week 13: THE RISE OF TECHNO POP.

Disco-music influenced burgher highlife created by German expatriates in Germany in the 1980's. Hiplife (vernacular Ghanaian rap) since the 1990's.

Week 14: THE RISE OF GHANAIAN GOSPEL MUSIC FROM THE 1980'S.

The use of dance in African separatist churches. The fusion of highlife and gospel in the 1980's. The rise of women gospel artists. A comparison between the emergence of Ghanaian gospel and 1930's American 'hot gospel'.

Week 15: IMPACT OF 'WORLD MUSIC' AND AN EXPANDING GHANAIAN TOURIST INDUSTRY

Recent growth of commercial folkloric groups and cultural centres. Government recognition of the commercial entertainment sector, the new and controversial copyright bill (with its folkloric tax clause), the World Bank interest in the African music industry

Week 16: SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS During the semester students are expected to work on a seminar presentation. For this they will be encouraged to do some original research and work with Ghanaian artists, local music associations, union and copyright bodies or local music archives. Prof Collins can put his students in touch with these individuals, bands and bodies. He will also occasionally suggest music programs that might be of interest to the students to attend

FINAL EXAM

Reading List

West African Popular Theatre by Karin Barber, John Collins & Alain Ricard (Indiana Univ. Press/James Curray, 1997)

West African Pop Roots by John Collins (Temple University Press, USA, 1992)

Highlife Time by John Collins (Anansesem Press, Accra, 1996).

Africa Oh Ye: A Celebration of African Music by Graeme Ewens (Guinness Books, UK, 1991)

Stern's /De Capo's 's Guide to Contemporary African Music (vols. 1 and 2) by Ronnie Graham. (Zwan and Off The Record Press, 1988 and Pluto Press, London, 1998).

Juju: A Social History and Ethnography of an African Popular Music by Chris Waterman.(University of Chicago Press, 1990)

Sweet Mother by Wolfgang Bender (Trickster Verlag, 1985)

Rough Guide to World Music edited by Simon Broughton and co. (Rough Guide Books, 2004/5)

Music Makers of West Africa by John Collins (Three Continents press, USA, 1985)

E. T. Mensah the King of Highlife by John Collins (Anansesem Press, Accra, 1996)

Fela: An African Musical Icon by Michael Veal (Temple University Press, 2000)

Fela: From West Africa to West Broadway editor Trevor Schoonmaker (Palgrave/MacMillan 2003)

ARTICLES AND PAPERS. Prof Collins will make available to each student (to put on lap-top) many of his writing on West African popular music: including books (x 3) articles and papers (x 27) discographies/record reviews (x 35) and artist profiles (x 56)

VIDEOGRAPHY Films that will be used in classes, whose production John Collins was involved with in various ways. These will also be available for his students in VCD form for student to play on their lap-top and in their own time .

1. 'Repercussions' (on Ghanaian popular music). BBC Channel 4/Third Eye Production, 50 mins, 1983
2. 'Rhythms of the World: Highlife in Ghana.' Huschert Realfilm, Germany, 28 minutes, 1993
3. 'African Cross Rhythms' (social context of music). Loki Films Denmark, 52 min, 1994
4. 'When The Moment Sings' (African musical philosophy). Visions TV, Norway, 32 mins, 1995
5. 'Highlife Harvest'. Ghana TV3 program on Ghanaian music scene economics, 25 mins, 2000
6. 'Brass Unbound' (on brass-band music in Ghana) ID TV, Holland, 45 minutes. 1993
7. 'Women's Digest' GTV program (interviews with T.O. Jazz, Prof Nketia etc , 40 mins, 1999
8. 'Stage Shakers:Ghana's Concert Party Theatre' by Kwame Braun, Indiana University Press, 103 minutes, 2001

STUDENTS CAN AT ANYTIME CONTACT PROF COLLINS VIA

Email: jcollins@ug.edu.gh Tel numbers 512555 (campus house landline) and 024 3239488 (mobile)