

HIPLIFE MUSIC IN GHANA: ITS EVOLUTION AND WESTERNISATION

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ABSTRACT

Music is an indispensable aspect of African culture; hence, music permeates in all aspect of African lives i.e. festivals, ceremonies, rituals, music and entertainments. In Ghana, highlife and hiplife music are the two most popular music genres. Hiplife which evolved in the twentieth century is a fusion of highlife and hip hop. This study discusses the evolution of hiplife music genre. It also establishes that although hiplife has western elements in its formation and evolution, those elements have been indigenised, decolonised and Africanised and thus could be said to be African music. Furthermore, this study posits that there has been progressive westernisation of Ghanaian hiplife music and musicians; this westernisation is evident in the stage names, music video concept, costume and music video location of hiplife musicians in Ghana.

Key Words: *Hiplife, Highlife, Ghana Music, Evolution, Indigenisation, westernisation,*

Introduction

Music is an important element of human culture, and every culture that exists in human history has a form of music. Thus, music is inseparable from culture. Over the years, scholars have defined music in their own perspective. Levinson (1990:273) defines music as ‘sounds temporally organised by a person for the purpose of enriching or intensifying experience through active engagement (e.g. listening, dancing, and performing) with the sounds regarded primarily or in significant measures as sounds. Kania (2011:2) also defines music as ‘any event

intentionally produced or organised to be heard and either to have some basic musical features such as pitch or rhythm or to be listened to for such features.

In Africa, music permeates in all aspect of life hence an African is born, named, initiated, fortified, nurtured, and buried with music (Aduonum, 1980). Studying the music of Africa is both exciting and challenging. This is perhaps, due to the unity as well as diversity that exist among African people as J. H Nketia(1975; ix) put it “the study of African music is at once a study of unity and diversity and this is what makes it exciting and challenging.” In Ghana, highlife and hiplife music are the two main popular music genres. Despite the fact that these two music genres have foreign elements in them, it must however be emphasised that they are both Ghanaian. Over the years scholarship in the fields of music, African history, cultural studies and African studies have examined the origin, rhythm and composition of hiplife but none has focused solely on the westernisation of hiplife music such as adoption of western derived stage names, music video concept and costume as a result of the American hip hop influence¹. This study therefore examines the evolution and westernisation of hiplife music genre in Ghana. It also traces the origin of highlife since hiplife is a hybrid of both highlife and hip hop.

The Brief History of Ghanaian Highlife Music

The Ghanaian highlife music has gradually evolved from a simpler form into a more complex one. Highlife as a Ghanaian music genre is generally believed to have evolved in the late 19th Century from a fusion of three major musical elements, namely: indigenous African music, European music and New World music from the Americas(Collin, 2005a). Highlife music evolved from a fusion of military and regimental brass band music of the West African Frontier Forces and colonial administration; Jazz, Swing and other forms of popular music from America; Calypso, Samba Cha ChaCha, Foxtrot, Meringue from the Caribbean and the West Indies; guitar music of Liberian *Krusailors* and stevedores; music of returning ex-slaves as well as music of ethnic groups in Ghana and the West African sub-region. Highlife music first evolved as a sub-regional music in the then “British West Africa” before its articulation in specific West African nations, especially Ghana and Nigeria (Emielu, 2005).

The Ghanaian, West African, Caribbean and American Influence on Highlife

What later came to be known as highlife has its origin in the social recreational music of various ethnic groups which had different appellations in different regions. Such social music includes *Nyomkro*, *Adowa*²(from the Asante), *Agbadzadance*³(from the Ewe), Mfantse's (Anglicised as Fante/Fanti) *Osibisaaba* and *Adaha*, Dagbamba's (also Dagomba) guitar songs, *Kokoma* and the *Ga'sTimo* and *Kpanlogo* which developed from dance-band highlife and local drumming in the 1960s (Collins, n.d).

In the 1870s to 1900s, the fife-and-drum and brass-band of West Indian Regiments began to make a significant musical impact on Anglophone West Africa (including Ghana) and helped in the formation of the popular performance styles in Ghana (Collins, 2004). By the 1870s there were local indigenous band stationed at Cape Coast Castle in Ghana to play both martial and popular English tunes. Furthermore, in the early 1870s, West Indian (Afro-Caribbean) Rifle Regiments which was made up of about six to seven thousand people mainly from Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados were brought to the castle to help fight in the Asante wars of 1873/1874 and 1900. They would often play their syncopated Afro-Caribbean music such as *Calypso* which influenced young Mfantse brass band musicians and by the 1880s the Mfantse combined the West Indian clave rhythms and their own West-African styles with the brass band music to form a music known as *Adaha*(Collins, 2004). Brass bands that played this 'proto-highlife' (which is *Adaha*) subsequently became popular throughout southern Ghana. One version of *adaha* was *konkoma*, which consisted of voices used as instruments to replicate the brass/regimental instruments found in *adaha*. Inland dwellers of Ghana embraced this style of music since brass band instruments were costly.⁴The contact between Ghanaians and the black Caribbean soldiers explains why the *Adaha* band musicians marched about in colourful 'zouave' uniforms (red-rimmed black uniforms and matching red hat with tassel) as these were also worn by the West Indian Regiment. Furthermore, this contact also explains why Caribbean-type street masqueraders (backed by local brass bands) became popular in the coastal Mfantse area of Ghana and are still performed there during Christmas, festivals and Easter parades (Collins, 2004).

The West African influence on highlife is the two-finger plucking technique of the highlife guitar playing introduced to Ghana by the Kru people of Liberia. These Kru people were sailors who sailed across the coast of West Africa; they used to travel the whole of the West African coast right down to the Congo either in their own canoes or as hired crew members on European and American trading vessels. They transported instruments such as the guitar and the concertina which met with the Ghanaian rhythms. Both guitar and concertina spread into the rural areas of Ghana in the form of *palm wine music* (Emielu, 2005). Palm wine music, according to Emielu (2005), was a trio consisting of guitar, percussion and vocals that was performed at venues where palm wine or its distilled form known as *Akpeteshi* was sold. Guitars introduced by *Kru* sailors also influenced the *Mfantseosibisaaba*. The *FantiOsibisaaba* music made use of indigenous Ghanaian percussion instruments as well as the guitars and the accordions of sailors, particularly the *Kru* seamen of Liberia.⁵ The *Kru* sailors also introduced an indigenous music known as *Oge*⁶. *Oge* later influenced *Kpanlogo*, and the latter became popular in Ghana in the 1950s (Collins, 1996). The originator of *Kpanlogo* is Otoo Lincoln who was a *Ga*⁷, and according to him, the name *Kpanlogo* was an imaginary name of a girl (Collins, 1996). *Kpanlogo* was formally promulgated in 1965 at the stadium in Black Star Square when Otoo and other *Kpanlogo* bands were invited to perform to some prominent people including Osagyefo Dr Kwame Nkrumah (Collins, n.d.).

African-American performances, particularly, *Goombay* also impacted on highlife. *Goombay* (*Gumbe*, *Gumbay* or *Gumbia*) is a Jamaican⁸ drum-dance of *myelism*, a neo-African healing cult associated with the maroon descendants of runaway slaves (Bilby, 1985). *Goombay* is played on the European bass and snare drum and the large square *goombay* frame drum upon which the drummer sits. *Goombay* later got to Freetown in 1800 on-board a ship by 550 maroons. This was after the maroon rebellion of 1795 in Jamaica and the subsequent deportation of maroons to Nova Scotia and from there to Sierra-Leone (Collins, 2004). The first Freetown references to *goombay* are from 1820/1 and 1834 (Harrev, 1987). A variant of this music which evolved in Freetown around 1900 called *assiko* (or `ashiko') became popular in Ghana and Nigeria and was played on frame-drums, guitars and accordions (Collins, 2004). *Goombay* (known in Ghana as *Gome*) was first introduced to the country by *Ga* carpenters and blacksmiths returning from the

Santa Isabella (Malabo) where they had been working (Hampton, 1979). It was introduced via Fernando Po in the 1940s and 50s.

Furthermore, highlife was also influenced by the post First World War I. As early as 1914, large dance orchestras' compositions were established by educated Anglophone West Africans to play music for the local westernized elites (Maczynski, 2011). They played a range of music from light classical pieces to ragtime music, calypsos, banjo songs and Negro spirituals. They also played western ballroom dances which included African-American/Caribbean/Latin American derived genres such as the foxtrot, one-step or turkey-trot, sambas, la congas and later rumbas and mambos (Collins, 2004). The earliest orchestra in Ghana was the Excelsior Orchestra of Accra formed in 1914, and this was followed up to the World War II period by a host of others such as the Jazz Kings, Rag-A-Jazz-Bo, Accra Orchestra, Winneba Orchestra, Cape Coast Sugar Babies, Casino Orchestra and West African Instrumental Quintet (Collins, 2004; Plageman, 2013). It was as a result of these Ghanaian high-class orchestras that the name 'highlife' was coined by local people in the 1920's for orchestrated renditions of local melodies (Collins, 2004).

Furthermore, during the Second World War, Anglophone West African music including Ghanaian highlife was greatly influenced by wartime swing style of jazz music followed by Calypsos and Afro-Cuban music and instruments (Collins, 2004). This influence was as a result of the stationed American and British soldiers' involvement in the music scene of West Africa (Collins, 2004). In Ghana, these British and American ex-servicemen arriving in Ghana in 1942, enjoyed swing and attended newly-formed local drinking spots that played the popular western music. Most importantly, foreign military personnel together with some Ghanaian musicians formed dance bands and played swing-style jazz music (Collins, 2004). An example of such band is that of Sergeant Leopard, who was a professional dance-band saxophonist in Britain. In the 1940, Leopard formed a band in Accra known as the Black and White Spots that consisted of foreign servicemen and some local musicians, including E. T. Mensah (Maczynski, 2004). Besides the Black and White spots there was another wartime band, the 'Firework Four', composed of four Ghanaians that included the drummer Kofi Ghanaba (then called Guy Warren)

and saxophonist Joe Kelly (Collins, 2004). However, the most important of these wartime swing-jazz bands was the Tempos band founded in 1940 by the Ghanaian pianist Adolf Doku and an English engineer and saxophonist Arthur Harriman who recruited two members of the armed forces stationed in Accra and later Ghanaian musicians E.T. Mensah, Joe Kelly and Kofi Ghanaba (Collins, 2004).

Following the departure of the foreign servicemen from The Tempos, E.T. Mensah became their leader and incorporated highlife songs to their repertoire, while still retaining a strong swing influenced sound (Matczynski, 2011). Guy Warren (Also known as Kofi Ghanaba), who had spent time playing music in London, brought Afro-Caribbean influences to the band and therefore added bongos and maracas to the line-up and Calypso songs to their repertoire (Collins, 2004).

European Influence on Highlife

Highlife music was also influenced by the piano music and hymns. These two elements, thus piano and hymns were introduced and taught by the Christian missionaries and school teachers throughout Ghana's colonial history, and this became popular with the educated African Christian elites in Ghana in the middle and late nineteenth century (Motenko, 2011). Furthermore, the military band established by the colonial government of the British West Africa also influenced highlife music (Motenko, 2011). It should also be noted that post World War I orchestras founded in Ghana also had some European influences. For instance, the philharmonic members of Sekondi Optimism Club gathered their expensive instruments and collective musical knowledge, which they likely acquired through their connections to missionary schools and churches, to form an orchestra in the 1923 that played at club events (Plageman, 2013).

The Evolution of Hiplife Music in Ghana

Hiplife music is also another music genre in Ghana. The name hiplife is generally believed to be a compound of the names "hip hop" and "highlife". This genre evolved from highlife music in the 1990s (Boateng, 2009); hence they share some kind of "genre-tic"⁹ connections. Hiplife music could be defined as the art of singing and rapping in either a Ghanaian language or Pidgin

language or English language or a fusion of these two or more languages over a fusion of highlife and hip-hop beat. Hiplife music has been described as a hybrid culture that evolved from both the Ghanaian Burger¹⁰ highlife and American Hip hop in the 1990s (Boateng, 2009). Hiplife music emerged and spread in the urban areas of Ghana from the 1990s. Both hip hop and hiplife music emerged as a response to societal issues (Salaam, 1995; Oduro-Frimpong, 2009). However, it must be noted that unlike in America where Hip hop originated and spread among the poor suburbs in South Bronx; in Ghana, it was rather the middle- and upper-class youth who first had access to rap music on recordings through their frequent travel abroad (Charry, 2012). In Ghana, it was particularly middle-class boarding schools that first provided a breeding ground for the performance of rap (Carl & Dankwa, 2012). Thus, hiplife music is of middle-class origin.

The genesis of hip-hop dates back to the 1970s in South Bronx, New York, USA. Hip hop (also known as rap music) is not just music but an entire culture on its own. Bronx had been a mainly black and Hispanic “*ghetto*” for decades. By 1930, nearly a quarter of the people who lived there were immigrants from the Caribbean Islands. For example, Cubans began arriving in Bronx in 1930s and 1940s while that of the Puerto Rican community goes back even further. The Bronx had never been prosperous, in spite of that, in the 1960s, it went into a sudden decline and by the end of the decade it had become the poorest and toughest neighbourhood in the whole of New York City (Davos, 2007). In a rented Sedgwick Avenue recreation room in Bronx on August 11, 1973, a Jamaican-born¹¹ DJ called Clive Campbell (popularly known as KoolHerc) pioneered the art of separating the breakbeat from already recorded songs and extending it using two turntables that were playing the same record.

Herc’s friend, Coke La Rock, began rapping over a continuous beat. The sound sparked an instant revolution and was soon recreated at parties all over South Bronx. This extended breakbeat further encouraged the evolution of break dancing in addition to rapping; Graffiti artists also offered a visual complement to the musical and dance performance (Embassy of the United States of America, 2016). Rap music’s unique feature of rhythmic talk over beat is connected to the bardic African traditions (Keyes, 1996 as cited in Oduro-Frimpong, 2009). Thus, to some extent, hip hop music could be said to be of African origin, and moreover, its beat

was started by a Jamaican (KoolHerc) who is of African ancestry. It would be wrong to assume that hiplife is just a fusion of two completely different music genres, thus, hip hop and highlife because that assumption ignores the cultural relationships that exist between Africans in Africa and those in the Diaspora.

In Ghana, Reggie Rockstone whose real name is Reginald Yaw Asante Osei is generally believed to be the originator of the hiplife music genre. Although he was born in the United Kingdom to Ghanaian parents, he spent his early life in Ghana. Reggie was a frequent traveller to the United Kingdom and United State of America.¹² He returned to Ghana in the 1990s and popularised a new music genre which is a blend of American hip hop and highlife music to Ghanaians. According to Reggie, he realised that Ghanaian youth loved and danced to hip hop although not all the hip-hop music lovers could grasp the meaning of the hip hop lyrics (Museke, 2008 as cited in Boateng, 2009). Rockstone, therefore, established a record label called *Kassa Records* and released albums such as “*MakaMaka*” (I Said It Because I Said It) in 1997, “*Me Na Me Kae*” (I Was The One Who Said It) in the year 1999, “*Me Ka*” (I Will Say) in the year 2000, “*Last show*” in the year 2004 and “*Reggiestration*” in the year 2010 (Boateng, 2009).

Although Reggie Rockstone is the pioneer of highlife music, some people credit Gyedu Blay Ambolley as the originator of Rap in Ghana. In 1973, Ambolley released his first record known as “*Simigwado*” --a half spoken half sang in Mfantse language. According to Collins, Ambolley’s invention of rap is a retrospective myth. His lyrics were rhythmic Mfantse slang and in the 1970s he was playing a funky form of highlife. His style is similar to the half-spoken half sang musical style found in Ghanaian traditional dirges, proverbial songs, *adenkum* and also some highlife guitar band songs like those of Nana Ampadu where proverbs are recited (John E. Collins, personal communication, 22nd April 2017). In the year 2012, Ambolley made an effort to challenge Guinness World Records that credited Sugar hill gang as the pioneer of rap in the whole world but his effort was unsuccessful. Sugar hill gang was a music group that released a hit track called “*Rapper’s Delight*” in 1979 and it became the first Hip hop single to top billboard top 40, but Ambolley’s recitative half spoken half sang musical style started in 1973

and would have made him the first pioneer of rap in the world if his style was indeed rap (Wiafe, 2012).

Westernisation of Ghanaian Hiplife Music

Conceptualisation and Contextualisation of “Westernisation”

Some music scholars are of the view that both highlife and hiplife music genres are not indigenous to Ghana because of the foreign elements they both have in them. However, it should be noted that to a very large extent, both music genres are very much indigenous. The word “indigenous” here does not mean that both music genres have not borrowed some foreign elements. Although highlife music has some American and European musical elements, it still has much indigenous elements from Ghana and West Africa in it; hence making it indigenous to Ghanaians. Hiplife music on the other hand has both hip hop and highlife elements in it. The Origin of hip hop is traced to KoolHerc, who was a Jamaican and therefore, his music could be said to be of African origin (Davos, 2007).

Both hiplife and highlife music can also be said to be indigenous because the borrowed foreign elements in them have gone through the process of indigenisation. This is what John Collins calls “progressive indigenisation” (Collins, 2005b). He further pointed out that two processes are going on simultaneously with regards to progressive indigenisation; First, westernisation of Ghanaian music. Second, counter current of Africanisation/indigenisation/de-colonisation. In each stage of the development of highlife and hiplife there was at first a process of copying imported culture - then mastering it – then assimilating it to create a new Ghanaian genre. For instance, Ghana brass bands copied Afro-Caribbean music in late 19th Century in Cape Coast then creating *Adaha* (Collins, 2004). Furthermore, the famous king of highlife, E.T. Mensah copied western swing jazz in the 1940s and then using it to create his unique style of highlife (Matczynski, 2011). Furthermore, Reggie Rockstone also copied American hip hop rhythm and then fused it with highlife rhythm to form a totally new genre known as hiplife (Boateng, 2009). Hiplife over the years, from the 1990s went through indigenisation and assimilation. Thus, this ‘indigenisation’ is done in a way that whatever foreign musical elements Ghanaian musicians copy or borrow are then Africanised and assimilated into Ghanaian music and culture.

The concept of “Westernisation” which is synonymous to Americanisation and Europeanization refers to the process whereby societies come under the cultural, political, economic, social and psychological influence of western nations. Westernisation (also known as Western influence) has led to the decline and extinction of some indigenous languages and cultures of Africa (Odinye&Odinye, 2012).Westernisation first began to creep into African socio-cultural environment with the arrival and contact of Europeans with Africa, a consequence of the Berlin conference in the quest for imperial pilfering of African resources. With Africa subjugated and dominated, Western culture began to thrive and replace African cultural practices and heritage¹³. Thus, indigenous African cultural practices paved the way for the foreign way of doing things as Africans became fully ‘westernised’ (Arowolo, 2010). However, it should be noted that, Westernisation did not end in Africa after colonial era; the West still exerts her influence through neo-colonial mechanisms to oppress and westernise Africa (Nkrumah, 1966). Thus, neo-colonialism has made it possible for westernisation to grow and spread in Africa.Ghanaian culture e.g. music, laws, customs, religion, moral values; politics has been affected enormously by westernisation. For instance, Ghanaian hiplife is now heavily influenced by American hip hop culture¹⁴. These foreign music elements have not been fully indigenised and assimilated into Ghanaian music and culture. Thus, westernisation occurs when the process of indigenisation and assimilation fails or progress slowly. Western influence in Ghana’s music is evident in the westernised stage names, lyrics, music video concept, rhythm, fashion, the use of nude dancers and models. It is therefore important to De-westernise the popular music in Ghana and Africa as a whole.

For the purpose of this paper, the context of “westernisation” was limited to the influences of American hip hop music and culture on Ghanaian hiplife music, musicians and their music videos.

Westernisation of Hiplife Music Genres: Reality or Mirage?

It is an undeniable fact that hiplife music genre has indigenous elements such as Ghanaian/African beats, drums, rhythm and the use of Ghanaian languages (Collins, n.d.; Cho,

2010). One would have thought that its indigenous elements would be maintained and the borrowed foreign elements Africanised and indigenised to suit Ghanaian culture but that has not been the case. Hiplife still has western influences from American hip hop and culture. This westernisation has affected not just the music produced in Ghana but the music video clips, lyrical content of music, stage names of musicians and costumes worn by musicians.

From the 1990s, most hiplife musicians maintained indigenous African stage names such as Akyeame (Okyeame Kwame and Okyeame Kofi), Konithene etc. However, from the 2000s onwards, most musicians have now resorted to the use of westernised/ western derived stage names which are often similar to or rhymes with the names of American hip hop musicians. Although some of the names are not exactly as that of American hip hop musicians, from the researchers' personal observation and inquiry¹⁵, the names are probably derived from their American hip hop counter-part due to the influence of hip-hop music and culture on Ghanaian musicians.

Table 1:

The table below shows the relationship between some stage names of hiplife musicians and their hip-hop Counterparts.

Stage names of some hiplife Artistes	Years Active	Stage names of some hip-hop Artistes	Years Active
Mzbel	2005 -present	Missy Elliot	1989-present
MizVee	2012 to 2013 as part of a group called D3. 2014-present as MizVee	Missy Elliot	
C-Real	2009 to 2012	C-Murder	1998-2016
Richie Rich	Unknown (but after 2000s)	The Real Richie Rich and Richie Rich (Rapper).	1982-present and 1988-present respectively
Richie	2006 -present	Richie Rich	
Guru	2009-present	Guru of Gang Starr	1986-2010
Fantana	2019-present	French Montana/ Montana	2002- present
Jay-So	2002-present	Jay Z	1986- present
Cocotreyy	2019-present	Trey songz	2003-present

Table 2:

The table below shows some westernised/ western derived stage names of hiplife musicians.

Stage names of some hiplife Artistes	Stage names of some hiplife Artistes
Wendy Shay	StrongMan
Medikal (denote ‘Medical’)	Yung L
Dopenation (pronounced as ‘Dhopenation’)	Teephlow
Sidney	Stonebwoy
Ebony Reigns	Shatta Wale
Fuse ODG	Reggie Rockstone
Batman (now Africanised to Samini)	Freda Rymz

From table 1, it could be seen that the hip-hop musicians started their musical career long before their Ghanaian counterparts; hence it could not have been that the hip-hop musicians rather copied their stage names from the Ghanaian hiplife musicians. First, it could be seen from the table that the stage names of Mzbel and MizVee are similar to that of the American female musician-- Missy Elliot. Second, it could also be seen that the stage name of C-real is also similar to that of his American counterpart called C-Murder. Third, Richie Rich and Richie both have stage names similar to that of Richie Rich of USA. Third, Guru’s stage name is the same as that of the American musician known as Guru. Finally, Jay-so’s name rhymes with that of Jay Z.

This practice is also evident in the Nigerian Afrobeat and highlife music scene. For example, Wizkid’s name rhymes with Weezy (Lil Wayne) and Wiz Khalifa (both are American rappers). Don Jazzy who is also a Nigerian music producer, artiste, and a record label owner also has a stage name similar to that of Jay Z, an American rapper and record label owner. Furthermore, Flavour N’abania who is also a Nigerian highlife musician has a stage name similar to the American musician, Flavour Flav. Ice Prince’s (Nigerian rapper) name also rhymes with that

of Ice Cube - an American hip hop musician and actor. Lastly, Mr Eazy who is also Nigerian Afrobeat musician has a stage name similar to that of Eazy-E, an American musician. Thus, it could be concluded that it is not only Ghanaian hiplife musicians' stage names that have been westernised but that of the Nigerians as well.

Table 2 also shows some western derived stage names of some Ghanaian hiplife musicians. Stage names like Wendy shay, dopenation, Ebony reigns, Reggie Rockstone, Medikal, Sidney etc. are not of African origin. These names are western derived stage names used by some Ghanaian musicians. Africans attach much importance to names and naming practices. In Africa, the basic function of naming is to serve as a system of individual identification. African names also have social, spiritual and psychological functions (Mazama, 2018), and for this reason, African names are not arbitrary but they are based on socio-cultural and ethno-pragmatic contexts. Stage names, just like African names, provide brand and identity. It is therefore surprising that Ghanaian musicians use Euro-American names or stage names with Euro-American origin.

At this juncture, the researchers argue that westernisation of stage names in Ghana is made possible due to the profound effect of colonialism and European westernisation. Africans were forced to adopt names of their enslaver; therefore, Ghanaian musicians now reject African stage names in favour of Euro-American ones. This phenomenon relates to what is termed as Cultural-Linguistic AIDS, where due to Yurugu virus a culture's immune system is broken down allowing anything, particularly Euro-American stage names, costumes and music video concepts to come in (Ani, 1994, 2010).

Westernization has also had effects on the choice of costume used by Ghanaian hiplife musicians as well as their choice of location for shooting their music videos. A careful examination and observation of a hundred hiplife music videos produced from the year 2000 onwards show the extensive use of bling and a typical American hip hop costume (YouTube, 2017). Furthermore, there is also some sort of competition among the contemporary hiplife musicians to shoot their music videos outside the shores of Ghana. Thus, South Africa, U.K, USA, and UAE have all

become the most preferred locations by hiplife musicians to shoot their music videos as evident in music videos by Sarkodie, EL, D-Black, Shatta Wale, Stonebwoy, Becca etc. The history behind this act started with the highlife musicians in the 1980s and 1990s where Burger¹⁶ highlife musicians moved to Germany to record their music and to shoot music videos because of the better recording studios and video production companies in Germany. Some of these musicians include: Pat Thomas, Charles Amoah, the Lumba brothers¹⁷, OforiAmponsah, and AmakyeDede (Carl, 2013). Currently, most musicians are now eager to travel overseas to shoot music videos meant for the Ghanaian music market although there are a lot of better recording studios and video production companies all over Ghana.

It should be noted, however, that both the mass media and social media have power to perpetuate westernization. For instance, a substantial number of experiments conducted over the past half-century have examined whether exposure to violent behaviour in films or televisions tends to increase aggressive behaviour in the short term. The consistent findings from such randomized experiments revealed that youths who watch violent scenes subsequently display more aggressive behaviour, aggressive thoughts, or aggressive emotions than those who do not watch aggressive and violent behaviour in films and TVs (Anderson et al, 2003). Another study conducted by the Council on Communications and Media (2009) on the impact of music lyrics, and music videos on children and youth revealed that exposure to violence, sexual messages, sexual stereotypes, and use of substances of abuse in music videos might produce significant changes in behaviours and attitudes of young viewers. This corroborate with Dorothy Broderick's assertion that the media do much more than providing information; they do have an impact and influence upon behaviour and attitude formation (Sryegly, 1978). Thus, from the above research findings, Western influence on hiplife music and artistes could also be attributed to the influence of both social and Western mass media. Digital and satellite TV networks as well as social media have made it easier for Ghanaian youth to be exposed to American hip hop culture and music videos thereby influencing Ghanaian music videos and musicians i.e. their choice of stage names, location of shooting music videos, and their choice of costume. As the youngsters watch American hip hop music videos, they consciously and unconsciously copy the

stage names, music video contents and hip-hop culture as a whole, and this could explain why most hiplife musicians have adopted western stage names.

Conclusion

Although both highlife and hiplife were formed from the fusion of both indigenous and foreign elements, these foreign elements have undergone the process of indigenisation. Music just like culture goes through the process of indigenisation and assimilation. The issue here is that hiplife has been greatly influenced by the America hip hop music and culture to the extent that it has become difficult for hiplife to assimilate and Africanise these foreign cultural and musical elements as it is supposed to. This is evident in the stage names, music video concept, costume and music video location of hiplife musicians.

Notes

¹We cite here some works, Boateng (2009); Collins (2009, 2005, 2004, 1995 & 1992); Carl (2003); Cho (2010); Oduro-Frimpong (2009); Emielu (2009 & 2010); Motenko (2011); Nketia (1975).

² Adowa was created more recently from the ancient Kete music; a dance of the King's executioner.

³Agbadza dance which emerged in Volta Region of Ghana between 1914 and 1945 was a traditional development of the Ewe war dances, called Atsiagbevor and Antrikpui.

⁴ For more information, see https://www.musicinafrica.net/fr/node/14502#_edn3

⁵ See <https://www.modernghana.com/entertainment/882/the-story-of-ghanaian-highlife.html>

⁶Oge is a slow Kpanlogo played on one drum, clips, a saw and a nail used to scrape it

⁷ An ethnic group in southern Ghana

⁸ Also found in Bermuda, Barbados, central Cuba, the Virgin Islands and North Carolina

⁹ I coined the term "Genre-tic" to refer to some rhythmic and composition similarities between the two genres, thus Highlife and Hiplife.

¹⁰ Burger highlife is a fusion of highlife, disco and funk music styles, resulting from the collaborative efforts of Ghanaian musicians who migrated to Germany and that country's musicians and producers.

¹¹ Jamaicans are African Descent. This means that their culture is largely African/Black

¹² See <http://www.ghanabase.com/reggierockstone/biography.asp>

¹³ As a result of westernisation and colonialism Ghanaian Senior High School History syllabus, which is a nationwide syllabus, acknowledges the impact of colonialism and Westernisation such as the introduction of Christianity, new food crops, introduction of western attire etc. as positive effects of colonialism. This is how bad westernisation has crept into the fabric of Africa. For more information, see Bonsu, N. O. (2015). *The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade: An Examination of the Incorrectness of the Ghana Senior High School History Syllabus. Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 9(4).

¹⁴ Since hip hop industry is mostly controlled by non-blacks, it has made it possible for hip hop musicians to be used as agents for spreading violence, gangsterism and enslaving the minds black youth. Research shows that blacks and people of colour are five times likely to end up in jail than whites. This, however, cannot be considered coincidental because research shows that mass media possess power to influence and brainwash people-- so is the power of music and music videos. Thug life, drug, prostitution, and crimes are glorified in hip hop music and videos as 'hip hop culture'. We therefore opine that there is nothing 'black' or 'African' about this perceived hip hop culture. Thus, Hip hop in my opinion, has become another neo-colonial tool to enslave blacks. For more information see *The Nigger Factory* by Speech, URLs: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WzccBh6Rweo> and <https://youtu.be/fj6oToy3wgE>

¹⁵ The researchers interviewed random Ghanaian hiplife enthusiasts to find out from them their perception of the influence of hip hop and American culture on hiplife artistes and music. Most interviewees agreed that hip hop is influencing hiplife, particularly the stage names, music video concepts, dressing and language. Few people disagreed citing modernisation as the reason behind the sudden preference of Euro-American stage names and music video concept by hip life musicians. It must, however, be noted that when the researchers probed further, it was apparent that what the interviewees referred to as modernisation is actually westernisation.

¹⁶ Burger is a Ghanaian term used to refer for to Ghanaian immigrant in Germany. Thus, music done by Ghanaian highlife musicians in Germany became known as Burgher highlife.

¹⁷ Lumba Brother included Charles KojoFosu aka Daddy Lumba, Nana Acheampong, and Sarkodie

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