

A SYSTEMATIC SURVEY OF THE LIFE OF WALTER KOMLA BLEGE A TEST CASE OF CREATIVE PERSONALITY

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ABSTRACT: *Walter Komla Blege, a second-generation Art Music Composer (Amuah 2012) was a self-made musician. He studied music at Mawuli Secondary School, Ho in the Volta region of Ghana under the tutelage of Nicholas Zinzendorf Nayo and had continued by self-taught approaches to become an astute and prolific African Art Music Composer. This paper walks its readers through his entire life and further examines his compositional processes and his use of indigenous idioms in his compositions to establish him as a true African Art Music Composer of the first order. Extracts from seven out of his over five hundred compositions are exhibited in the paper to give credence to his choice of text, chord progression, use of cadence, scale and compositional processes. The paper uses purposive sampling approach to arrive at the respondent, Walter Komla Blege and the seven selected pieces that I picked from his library on his permission. I argue that Walter Blegs's style will be emulated by the younger generation composers.*

Keywords: *Choral anthem, Dance genre, Evedome, Komla Blege, Kpedze, Dzathor, Gabaḍa.*

I. INTRODUCTION

It is said that “a society that has not honoured its heroes is not worth dying for”. That is why people devoted time to write about prominent people of societies especially in the music establishment to educate people about the achievements they have made that contributed to the development of the Ghanaian society. Many of the Western composers such as G.F. Handel, J.S. Bach, W.A. Mozart, Joseph Haydn, Johann Brahms just to mention but few have their biographies well documented and made available to the global community by means of the internet. But many African composers who equally have rubbed shoulders with their Western compatriots lacked records of their works and biographies on the internet for the global community to have access to. The only few African composers who are known of by the global community include Dr. Ephraim Amu and Professor J.H.K. Nketia. But there are no or little records of some other prominent personalities who equally contributed so well to the development of their societies in terms of their musical works. One of such personalities was Walter Komla Blege.

The aim of this qualitative write up is therefore to put on records that Walter Komla Blege was not only an Educationist, Historian, Dramatist, Author, Linguist but also an all-time Ghanaian and for that matter a true African Art Musician of a first order. Significantly, his compositional procedures will be fully documented and made available to the global community as a study material for young and beginning African Art Musicians. The paper hinges on the theory of Bogdan and Biklen (1992, pg. 58) which states that qualitative research has a design to suggest otherwise would be misleading. How they proceed is based on theoretical assumptions (the meaning and process are crucial in understanding human behaviour, the descriptive data are what is important to collect, and that analysis is best done inductively) and data collection traditions (such as participant observation, unstructured interviewing, and document analysis). These provide the parameters, the tools and the general guide to proceed.

Providing frame for this study, Jacobson (2011) opined that in studying art music composer, these things must be discussed: the approach used by the person, his importance, historical context, his biography and works. This paper therefore exposed the approach Walter Komla Blege used in composing his songs, his importance to

society, the historical background of faith as found in the crush of African culture and Christian ideologies that characterised his childhood, and his biography.

Nketiah (2004) indicated that:

A composer must master the fundamentals of African melody and rhythm so that he can create African tunes based on any of the varieties of heptatonic, hexatonic and pentatonic scales used in African societies. When he is able to do this, he needs not always to borrow tunes from the traditional repertoire, for he can create tunes that would be true to the traditional idiom.

This quote demonstrated the reason Walter KōmlaBlege naturally loved indigenous African music yet had not picked any existing tune as a resource material in any of his works. He rather composed truly original works that reflected his deep understanding of a particular indigenous dance vein he chose anytime to write for.

About sixty percent of the data collected for this article are the results of the thorough interview I conducted with Papa Walter KōmlaBlege in 2014 when I was an M. Phil student.

Excerpts exhibited in the work were taken from some of the musical scripts I collected from Papa Walter KōmlaBlege himself for my in-depth analysis. It taught several of his compositions based on which I gathered many of the facts.

A discussion I held with Joy Korda, a choirmaster-organist who knew Papa Walter KōmlaBlege very well, played and taught several of his songs as well as discussion with many lovers of Blege's songs who mainly were choristers also revealed some of the facts.

This paper is captured under the following eight thematic areas thus: Introduction, A brief background of Walter KōmlaBlege, His: formal education, Working life, Musical life, Earlier compositions, Compositional styles (Western style, Western blended with African style and African style) and his compositional processes.



A photograph of Papa Walter KōmlaBlege

II. A BRIEF BACKGROUND OF WALTER KŌMLA BLEGE

Central to this article is the fact that in terms of Educational Qualifications, Walter Kŏmla Blege is not really a musician by training. That is why he had earned the displeasure of some people in the Music Establishment in Ghana. But I daresay, his musical works made him achieved fame and the admiration of the music listening and loving public.

The forward of Prof. Nicholas Zinzendorf Nayo; (a professor in music) to An African Book of Songs described Papa Walter Blege as an amateur music composer of Ghana. He remarked in the preface to the first two volumes of the African Book of Songs series authored by Walter Kŏmla Blege as follows:

*“Walter Blege, rightly is a composer of the first order in Ghana,”
He defines “amateur” as “a person half-baked in a discipline” but
hesitated to call Walter Blege as an amateur composer “because he
has acquired a position among professionals and excelled many, many
of them.*

The works of Papa Walter Kŏmla Blege posed challenge to the definition of who a professional musician really is. Is it those who completed music academies/universities and had certificates but have no musical compositions to their credit or those who cannot play any instrument, cannot hold any musical score to teach same to choirs let alone standing in front of performing choirs to conduct them to success who are the professionals?

Walter Kŏmla Blege was born on 23rd December, 1931 to Fritz Atigri Kwami Blege of Kpedze and Wilhelmina Dzathor of Alavanyo. His father sent him to stay with his maternal grandparents to enable him attend school. This was due to the fact that his father had no formal education whilst the grandfather: Jacob Dzathor was a retired teacher who had all the right recommendations to make as far as formal education matters were concerned. In his memoirs, Blege (2019: Pg. 11) recounted:

*My world is different. It is wide and goes as far as my eyes and legs
can carry me. I am born to my parents. But I am the child of my
mother’s parents. My uncles were my playmates, and my father’s
sister’s cousins hold the disciplinarian’s cane behind me.*

In those days, all community members were responsible for the full-strength upbringing of the African child morally, physically, spiritually, mentally, and materially. Blege (2019: Pg. 11) again stated his personal experiences on this matter saying:

I am the child of the whole community.

Whether hungry or thirsty, he dared not visit his parents’ home which was just separated from the grandparents by *Minetɔ*’s (a neighbour) walls. This was a mutual agreement between the two giant homes knowing very well that an animal placed under the care of two masters is expose to the dangers of prey to wild animals. He consequentially suffered from the wrath of the “Talk True” cane when he broke this rule one day. Scars emanated from the “talk true” encounter remained on his thigh to keep the sore experience in his memory; he remarked in one of our verbal conversations.

Even though this was the case, Fritz was not forgetful of his responsibilities as a father. A father is the one who provides food for growth, morality for development, shelter, clothing, medical care, education as well as spiritual needs as security to the child. The father is therefore the god of the home to provide all these securities. So, when *grandpaDzathor* overstepped his boundary by baptizing *Adzoyo* (an elder sisters of Papa Walter Blege) into the Roman Catholic faith instead of the *EveKristoHame* or *NyanyuiHame* (that was how the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Ghana was known), her father: Fritz Blege never took it kindly at all. In what appeared to be a “friendly fire” fight, he warned his father-in-law never dare to repeat that mistake. This was the omen of success that got Tata Walter Blege baptized into the E.P. Church; even though he was brought up by a grandfather who was a staunch member of the Roman Catholic Church.

African names are secular and Western names are sacred; so, the missionaries made the early Christian converts to believe. Therefore, anyone who wanted to go to heaven must not accept African names as an identity but Western names. In this same vein African music and musical instruments were not clean enough to enter the Church (Chapel). So, my question; is it the names we respond to as African people and our instruments or the materials we use to manufacture (the skin of the animals we eat, the wood of the normal trees of the world that we use to manufacture the drums) these instrument that are not holy? So, when Kŏmla Blege was to be baptized, the father gave him the name *KALĒ*. But the catechist rejected the name outright with the explanation that that name would not make him ascend into heaven. He therefore suggested Walter to the father. Even though the father was not too

happy about the incident, he accepted it for the son to be taken through the rituals of baptism. Coincidentally, Walter means Brave which translates into the *Eve* language as *Kale*.

In Ghana like elsewhere in Africa, certain names are given to children by parents who suffered a continuous loss of their children to death. This is done to tease death from killing subsequent children of such parents. Examples of such names are *Amekɔtsɔ* (the great ones were destroyed), *Megadzinawo* (I have given birth to another one for death), *Kugbleyetɔ* (death has destroyed mine), *Akɔli* (Refuse damp) etc. Blege is one of such names. The name Blege means the child has just come to deceive the parents as death would soon take him/her away. Papa Walter Kɔmla Blege died on Monday, February 1, 2021 and was buried on Saturday, June 26, 2021 at the age of 90.

Blege had his elementary education in E.P. Primary and Middle Schools at Kpedze. He entered Mawuli Secondary School at Ho from 1951 to 1955 where he had his General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary Level' (i.e., G.C.E, 'O' Level) certificate with music as one of the courses he offered. In 1956-1957, he proceeded to Achimota School for his G.C. E. 'Advance Level' certificate. He attended University College of Gold Coast now University of Ghana-Legon where he obtained a B.A. Honours degree in African History from 1958-61. In 1962-63, he went back to University of Ghana, Legon for his Post Graduate Diploma in Education. In 1967, Blege won a Canadian Government Scholarship tenable at the University of Toronto, OISE for the master of education (M. Ed.) Degree in Curriculum Studies in 1969. He finally entered International Institute of Educational Evaluation in Granna, Sweden and had an Advanced Diploma in Social Studies, which was a further study in Curriculum Development.

Among other things, he served as a Civil Servant, Headmaster of two Higher Institutions of Education (i.e., Mawuli Secondary School, Ho and Anum Presbyterian Secondary School), as Director of the National Academy of Music in Winneba, as a Deputy Director-General of the Ghana Education Service, as a Deputy Secretary (Deputy Minister) of Education Responsible for Culture in Ghana, and upon retirement from the Public Service, a founding President of the E.P. University College in Ho, a premier university facility in the capital city of the Volta Region.

Papa Walter Kɔmla Blege was born some ninety (90) years ago into a musical home or into a musical environment. His father, the late Fritz Blege, an elder of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, was a staunch member of the Hadzihagā (Great Choir) in the Kpedze E.P. Church. He stated that his father's participation in the Choir left an ineffaceable mark on his musical memory as a growing child.

Just as Prof. J.H.K. Nketiah, Tata Walter Kɔmla Blege was brought up not by his parents, but by his maternal grandparents and maternal uncles with an uncompromising Christian principle. Djedje and Carter (1989; pg. 3) observed that

As a Christian, Kwabena Nketia's grandparents and uncles who brought him up have not permitted him to participate in performance of traditional music which the church regarded as primitive and pagan. However, the continued adherence of his mother and other relatives to traditional customs and ways of life provided for him a broad range of musical practices and styles in Akan life.

Jacob Dzathor of *Alavanyo* (known for its musical heritage) was a retired school teacher who settled in Kpedze after the First World War. The grandpa, Jacob Dzathor, had a retired trumpet kept on the ceiling of his room in which little Walter Kɔmla Blege slept with other children. That he said spoken a volume of musical activities in his early environment. His grandpa had not only a trumpet but eight children, all of whom were growing musicians in the local Roman Catholic Church founded by the grandpa in Kpedze, Tata Blege's hometown. He lived in his grandparent's home from school going age till he finished high school.

At the time he was attending Primary School, Jerome, the third among the eight uncles, formed a Home Choir. His uncle Jerome was the Choir Master in the local R.C. Church and Konkoma No. 2 Band Leader in town. He formed the Home Choir so that he could have a knowledge and foretaste of the songs he would teach the Catholic Choir.

Little Blege and his uncles all learnt how to read music by sight. They started with sol-fa notation and continued with staff notation. He sang the Soprano part in the Home Choir. These were the beginnings of little Blege's musical life.

At Junior School, he joined the school (flute) band and when his uncle John left as Band leader, he took over his position. His instruments were the piccolo flute, and bass flute. At the Senior School, period (Achimota 1956-57) the people of his hometown formed a dance band and he became the distance Band Leader. As a leader, he had to master the playing of the clarinet, saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) and the fingering of all the brass instruments including the problematic trombone to be able to teach them to group members.

He began choral music composition career while in High School. Mr. (later Prof.) N. Zinzendorf Nayo joined the staff of Mawuli School briefly in 1952, left and came back again in 1954. At that time, Blege was in Form

4. N.Z. Nayo taught him 'O' Level Music and helped him with 'A' Level exams privately. Nayo became his mentor for life. Blege wrote in the style of his mentor: anthems full of chromatics, key changes (modulations) and counterpoint. By the year 1970, he had made a few skirmishes into authentic music areas to catch the attention of Rev. Galevo, a leading clergy man of the E.P. Church who threatened to have him excommunicated from the Church if he dared compose a song expressing a fetish (*Aḍavatram*) dance and brought it to the Church.

In 1973 he wrote *MA'U SITSOFE*, a heavy anthem which captures the varying moods in Ps 90 including protective power of God and the frailty of man, death ending on a happy note of blessing. The anthem travelled through modulations of about 8 keys. Performers have to do a traditional dirge along the way at "*Agbenɛɛɔ ya gbe wònye*" with a final passage in "*Miaf'asinudɔwɔwɔ wo nana wóa like*" (the closing 20 bars).

The death of Rev. Galevo in 1974 and the failure of this difficult anthem rendered by Mamprobi E.P. Church Choir under the composer's (i.e., Blege's) own baton at the funeral of Rev. Galevo shook Tata Blege to the very core of his being. He had to quickly run away from the funeral ground to save himself of the disgrace the failure meted out to him. A reflection of the whole incident brought about a change in his musical style from being a follower of Nayo to a style he could call his own.

III. HIS COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

Back from Galevo's funeral, he embarked on a serious search of self-identity style-mission. From Ho, where he was then serving as Headmaster of Mawuli School, Papa Blege went to his hometown both mentally and physically, and there he discovered that Ghana has gold mines of musical resources in its traditional areas unexploited.

When he was a growing child, Kpedze, his hometown used to be a thriving commercial centre populated by the original settlers (*afetɔwo*) and a large variety of new settlers (*amedzrowo*). There were enclaves of new settlers in *Anyako Kɔdzi*, *Ueta Kɔdzi*, *Ayɔ Kɔdzi* all from southern areas of Volta Region; three settler communities from Nigeria, others from Togo, *Kwahu* from the Eastern Region of Ghana, the *Zamrama* people who carried a whole shop of goods on their heads, and a large *Zongo* community made up of migrants from Northern Ghana.

Each of these groups including the original settlers had its own dance groups. The royal traditional rulers called chiefs had their royal ensembles of drummers highly respected in the community. They handled the talking drums called *tumpanie*, the state drums called *Uukpo*, and with the big state drum or *Uuga* that come together in trio to do the *Zagada* dance sometimes reserved for the royals and the fearful in society.

Then there was the fearful *atikpladza* dance which was done when disaster struck or when the towns cleaning ritual had to be performed. Another dance called *Gabaḍa* was a very popular social dance, while *adevu* was at hand to celebrate the heroic exploits of hunters. The dances, namely *totoeme*, *gbolo*, and *zigi* were available for entertainment by the women in the community, whilst the *aviha* dance was deployed by the women on funeral occasions. At weekends, the *jolle* band was on display at the village square.

Different dances in their dozens emerged from the new settlers on different occasions. From the *Ayɔ* community came the *agbadza* dance, the *atrikpui*, a historical dance, the *atsiagbekɔ*, a highly choreographed dance aimed at preparing the youth for war, and the *takara* dance from a group of Togo origin.

The Yoruba settlers had their dance. The *Basare* group had their dance, the *Kabre* from Togo had their dance, whilst the *Zongo* community were in town with the *Gumbe* dance. At the town centre, the two *konkoba* dance groups were engaged in serious rivalry and healthy competition. Occasional visits were made by Cantata groups known from some coastal towns of the Volta Region. Those visiting cantata groups, known for their wonderful costumes, inspired Tata Blege to write his two Operas (the first of which failed) later in life. There were more than twenty of these dances on count.

However, as a growing child, he was strictly forbidden to go out to watch the performance of any of these dance groups in town. The forbidding shots were fired at Tata from four angles: from home, his Christian parents said that the dances were pagan, satanic and immoral; from school the teachers said the dances were uncivilized, and again immoral and they punished him with twelve lashes of the cane for leading a group of colleague students to sing *gabaḍa* dance songs in a school hostel; from church the pastors and catechists said the dances were bad and an antichrist dose of immorality as you can testify even by the names the dances are described (*gabaḍa* (evil bell), *gbolo* (prostitute), *jolle* (girlfriend)); from the Whiteman District Commissioner, traditional dances are anticolonial, are a cover up for activities against authority and a competition with the ballroom dances of the white man. School children must be loyal to the British Empire and not be adherents of local culture and traditions.

When he turned to the Village after Rev. Galevo's funeral and the failure of the Mamprobi Choir in singing *MA'USITSOFE*, he found more than 20 traditional dances waiting to be used from the village as resource material for art music composition.

Since then, Papa Blege had made traditional dances as the basic framework of his art music compositions. African dance is defined as a composite musical work made up of **poetry** (song text), an **ensemble of African instruments**, an established set or pattern of **rhythms**, related **sounds** and **musical idioms** (song) derived from language and ideational purposes of the dance, appropriate **response movement** of the body (dance) and dramatization of events portrayed by the dance.

Any time Papa Blege composed music, there were three options available to him.

- He can write like a European (Western Style).
- He can write like Ephraim Amu, the pioneer African composer, or like J.H.K. Nketia, another astute African composer using African musical composition techniques or like N.Z. Nayo, a student of Amu and Papa Blege's mentor and teacher.
- He can write like himself using African traditional dances as the framework of art music composition.

IV. THE WESTERN STYLE

In writing music in the Western style, Tata Walter Kɔmla Blege tried to follow the rudiments of music theory. He also applied the rules of Harmony as much as possible. That means he must avoid prohibited intervals like consecutive 5ths and 8ths, cross of parts, etc. He must introduce modulations, which in the Western tradition, favours the dominant. He also goes into counterpoint to improve the texture of the song and some fugal exposition as well. Example are *MÍETSɔ ɪKU UUUU Vɛ NA MI* and *MIHEYI* all located in *OPERA KRISTO*. See excerpts of the two songs below.

MÍETSɔ ɪKU UUUU Vɛ NA MI

Walter Blege

KPLE KAKA ƉE DZI BOKOO

MIHEYI

Walter Blege

V. THE AFRICAN MUSICAL COMPOSITION TECHNIQUES

When we talk of African art music, Papa Blege's thinking is different. He contended that for the mere fact that the composer of a piece of music is an African does not make the work African music. Idioms used in the

composition must be thoroughly investigated to accept a work in the African vein or otherwise. The following cited in Agbenyega (2015) are Papa Blege’s words.

What the great musicians of Africa and for this matter Ghana called African music is an undefined term. They say any music composed by an African man is African music, even though they are founded on Western musical styles in both rhythmic and instrumental wise. Amu who fostered African music said use should be made of intonation and durational principles of our African music.

For music to be truly African, and for the term African music to be meaningfully define, elements of conception must be African in origin but not only the composers. African music should be set to African dances, language contour must be strictly observed, rhythmic patterns must be African. This philosophy is what led Tata Blege into finding a style he called his. In composing his music, Tata Blege said the answers he gave the following questions he normally asked himself, were what resulted in his over 500 art musical works thus: If *Eve* people are to sing their song,

- Which dance will they set it to? (Traditional dances e.g., *Akpi, agbadza etc.*).
- What type of instrument will they play on it? (i.e., Instruments of a particular dance).
- What type of people will play the instruments? (i.e., women or men from which tribe?).
- What type of song will they want to sing on the dance? (i.e., the dance vein)
- How would the song go? (i.e., movements that will be made on the song; rhythm of the dance).

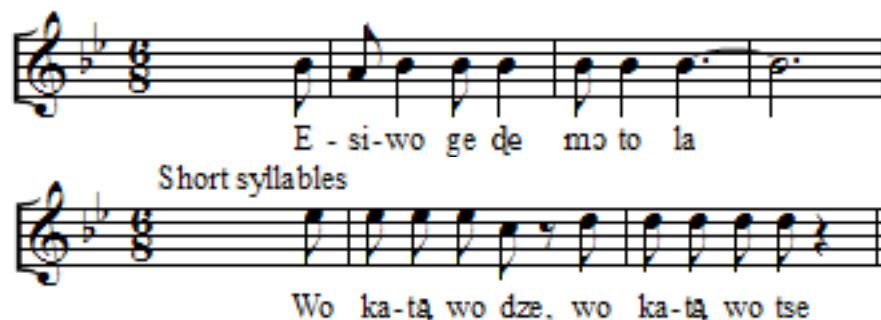
Writing under this category, Papa Blege deployed the techniques identified by pioneer composers of African music. These include the Call-And-Response technique and intonational and durational principles of the spoken language. Typical example of Call-And-Response Technique is found in his *GOLİYATIE*. Over 20 calls were made in this song, to which the response was “*GOLİYATIE*”.



The intonational principle refers to the tonal level of the spoken language, as to whether a syllable is high, mid or low. Such as the examples in the table below:

SYLLABLE	TONAL LEVEL	MEANING
Wò	Low	You
Wo	Mid	Sun (dialectic)
Wó	High	Explode (them)
Wò (yi)	Low-high	He/She (went), what! (dialectic)

The durational principle refers to the value of the syllables, as to whether they are short or long. The following examples are excerpts taken from PapaBlege’s “*Nukuwu La*”.



VI. HIS COMPOSITIONAL PROCESSES

Tata Walter Kɔmla Blege's compositional style is derived from African Dances. He observed that composition is decision making. He takes step-by-step decisions when he embarked on the compositional venture as follows:

He decides on the Dance Vein in which the song should be written, depending on the subject or the theme. For example,

SUBJECT/THEME	DANCE VEIN
Courage	<i>Asafo, Akpi or Kalevu</i> may be suitable.
Marriage	<i>Gbolo and Zigi</i> which teaches growing girls about child care, obedience, values of beauty and humility etc.
Royalty	<i>Adowa</i> dance. E.g., <i>Fia Nenɔ Ame Nu (Found in Opera Kristo)</i>
Social values	<i>Halo, Gabaɖa</i> (recitative), <i>Jolle</i> dances
Death	<i>Aviha, Akaye, Nyagbaɖe</i> etc.
Joy/Entertainment	<i>Gahu, Tuidzi, Bɔbɔbɔ, Highlife, Agbadza</i> dances.

Examples: Dances are rich in value teaching: lampooning D.C. of Ho-Kpando in the colonial era.

“Yevu Ke Xe Do Se Dzɔle”.

Write the Poetry (i.e., to write the Song Text/lyrics first). In doing this, the following five stages are his guiding principles.

- Take account of the Rhythm of the Dance Vein of the song.
- The Song Text must be philosophical (be deep in thought and in meaning) according to the traditions of the particular dance involve.
- Ideas must be based on proverbs, if possible. E.g., *“Agɔ bɛa de bɛa yee*
Agɔya meɖaa ‘mi o lo.”
- Song Text must carry idiomatic characteristics of the language of the dance.
e.g., *Ayoo, aye, kee*
- As much as possible, language of song text must be dialectic. i.e., related to the environment in which the dance prevails.

He normally provide footnotes indicating instruments to be used in driving home his feelings and the need to use a particular dance and song. For example, in his *Ameɣibɔviwoe*, he used the *tumpanie* (the twin talking drums) drums and double bells elaborately in supporting and complementing the voices. He also gave the drums and the double bell a prominent place in the music score. He also gave notice that the male *tumpanie* drum (i.e., the one with the deep sound) must be tuned in the key of G major whilst the female drum (i.e., the one with the light or high sound) must be tuned in the key of D major.

Drum language and its notation as an integral part of music score have become essential to his style as you will find in *Ameɣibɔviwoe, Ghana Kente, and Ma'u Dzifo Uito La* (A Drum Introit written to start Christian worship without sleep featured in the great *Opera Kristo*).

In *Opera Kristo*, the performance by the royal entourage was captured in *Zagada Uuga* drums fully covered in the musical scores. In the entire opera, the drums cued in the voices, alerting them about the next musical input. The drums also played a leading role in rolling out most of the 42 songs in the Opera ending proceedings in an *Atrikpui* dance finale.

ƉƉƉƉƉ NEZI

ATUMPAN (TALKING DRUM) INTRIOIT
DRUMS TUNED IN B-FLAT MAJOR AND E-FLAT MAJOR

Walter Blege

SPOKEN TEXT *ECHO-PLAY*

Mawu Kɔkɔetɔ la le mɛa dome

Ɖɔɔɔe nezi

VII. THE SONG WRITING

This is the stage where he would add flesh and character to the poem he had written. This is the time he will read the song text again and the process will then suggest to him how each part must sound, sometimes in many forms. He tried to put down the ideas in some orderly form. Song writing is not a mechanical thing. It does not go by a fixed route. This is how his experience directed him to go about composition. At this point, he agreed/obeyed, or disagreed/disobeyed the harmonic rules. For example, he used a lot of unresolved discords in *Ameyiboviwoe* for dramatic reasons (bars 6-7, 18-19 of the opening Section A, and bars 37-41 of Section B, and so on and so forth.). The following figures are extracts from *Ameyiboviwoe*.

This is the time he gives character to the song. In this connection, he made sure to bring out the mood, which he wanted the song to carry. For examples:

- (i) *YehowaVɔvɔ* (Joy, expressed in highlife)
- (ii) *Wɔe Nye Mawua* (Anger, expressed in *Asafo* dance).
- (iii) In *AmenuveTata*, he used the song text and the moods characteristic of the *aviha* dance to express
 Sorrow- *hmm, hmm*
 Pain and pity-*dzalelele!*
 Helplessness –*enulédawota l'a vɔvlɔdome*
 Chaos-*basaa*

In picture writing style, the music builds up, climaxing the distressing mood of Jesus in measures 79 to 85 ending at a *forzando* with *ei!*

VIII. THEMUSICAL SCALE

Papa Walter Kɔmla Blege stated that when he went back to his village to look for resources for his type of compositions, he saw that there were three musical scales (sounds according to pitch) available to him. These were:

- (i) The Western scale starting from doh and ending on doh.
- (ii) The Supertonic scale starting from ray and ending on ray, and
- (iii) The pentatonic (five-tone) scale.

Most people use the Western scale in writing their music. However, he used all the three scales but have raised issues about using the Western analytical tools in identifying tones and the chords of the scales that do not belong to the Western category.

He said *tuidzi* dance group in town sung a song to lampoon the overzealous man engaged in sex in a town not too far away from his hometown: *Kpedze*. The song ended: f:f:f, that is in a ray-fah-lah chord which may be identified as chord Ia of the supertonic scale. This then posed the question

- Is he right in identifying it as chord I(a), or?
- Do you agree with a fellow musician who named it as IIa?
- Is it correct to describe the scale at all as Supertonic scale?

Agbeyadzie Miele, one of Papa Blege's dirges was written using the Pentatonic Scale to commemorate the death of Elias Dogbatse who was a musician from *Añlɔ* area of the Volta

region where the Pentatonic Scale starts from and where does it end? African Scales have a right to stand on their own feet and be analyzed with their own tools.

In the concluding part of our discussions, Papa Walter Kɔmla Blege had the following remarks to make of his life.

.... but in these matters, some people regard Walter Blege as a REBEL and NON-CONFORMIST. I have always been so. At home they told me not to watch the dances in ablɔme (village square). I responded by stealing away to watch Alavanyo Tata performed in the Kpedze market place. At school they caned me for singing gabaɖa dance songs, and I became a gabaɖa composer addict. In town the DC harassed my people for doing the dzɔle dance, and I became the band leader in town. More yet than the few, however, admire the rebel.

It is established that Tata Walter Kɔmla Blege was the first African Art Musician who introduced the use of *asafo* (war) dance instruments into the liturgy of the E.P. Church if not into the liturgy of all churches in Ghana. This manifested in his extensive use of *Tumpanie* set of drums (the twin state drums), *Uukpo* (another state drum), *Gaɖoɖo(e)* (the Double Bell), and animals' horn, and other local musical instruments as appropriate in specific dance genre he composed for, and gave them prominence in accompanying choral songs in the church. Typical examples are seen in *Ameyibɔviwoe* anthem, *Doɖoɖe Nezi* (a drum introit recitation demanding perfect silence at the beginning of a worship) and the many other songs in the traditional vein as featured in *Opera Kristo*.

Papa Walter Kɔmla Blege's works largely are a recommendation to Ghanaians and other Africans to worship God like Ghanaians/Africans by using Ghanaian/African musical instruments in accompanying singing in the Church during worship and composing songs (hymns/anthems) using Ghanaian/African idioms and for young Ghanaian/African composers to compose like indigenous Ghanaians/Africans using traditional idiom in their composition and composing in tradition dance vein.

Papa Walter Kɔmla Blege had over 500 choral and instrumental works to his credit.

With all these musical achievements, was Papa Walter Kɔmla Blege a professional musician or not?

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