

Kusasi Women's Songs

Ethnic group: Kusasi

Language (dialect): Kusaal

Country: Ghana

Recording date: August 16, 2015

Recording location: Agaogo, Upper East Region, Ghana

Total Recording time: 11:35

Technician: Brian Nowak

Group members:

Ayawini Agbisne- lead vocals

Track names -- duration

1) various women's songs - 11:35

Group introduction:

Just as spontaneously as a group of women would form at other social gatherings, this group of women joined the recording party after Akparibon's spike-fiddle performance. These songs represent songs that women sing while attending community celebrations or other times that women come together.

Kusasi women participate in agriculture in addition to an enormous array of household chores. The diet is mostly based in corn, millet and sorghum, with a couple of local brews, including millet and sorghum beer and a local moonshine. Women highly animate celebrations with dancing and have a relatively free public life, if they find the time.

Recording context:

Young and old feel out the dynamics of the circle including one pregnant and one sick woman, that will and will not dance in their respective turns. An elder woman can be seen at times proud and glad to clap and sing along sitting in her chair close to the women. The pleasure here is seeing that so many different songs and associated dance-steps are covered in a short period of time.

The clapping and dance-steps form the rhythmic structure, high and low, both complementing each other before introducing complementary patterns. The call and response vocals create a beautiful melody that carries in the air until the group confidently responds.

The circle dance's format reinforces group cohesion and interdependence. The standard format is that one woman in the center

faces one of the women in the circle for a face-off dance. The woman in the center returns to the circle and the woman that danced from the circle enters into the middle, and then dances face to face with the person that was standing to their right in the circle. They then continue around the circle.