

Troupe Folklorique d'Aneho á Yesuvito

Ethnic group: Mina

Language (dialect): Gen-Mina

Country: Togo

Recording date: April 13, 2016

Recording location: Yesuvito neighborhood, Aneho, Togo

Total Recording time: 23:25

Technician: Brian Nowak

Group members:

Drum section:

Augustin Ananou (off camera) – gakokoe (double gong)

Godson Koueri -- Kpetchi 1

Goddam Koueri – Kpetchi 2

Marc Koueri – Assile

Messan Ananou (lead drum) – Aboutou

Women singers:

Folinon Koffisson – singer

Akpidje Solagnou – singer

Adjo Ananou – singer

Girls:

Ayokogan Koueri

Ayeliri Koueri

Ablakou Koueri

Ayokoir Koueri

Track names -- duration

1) Aneho 1 – 7:19

2) Aneho 2 – 3:48

3) Aneho 3 – 4:14

4) Aneho girl – :26

5) Augustin interview – 7:38

Group introduction:

The town of Aneho is near the border with Benin, and significant as the second largest town along the thin coast that also hosts the capital, Lomé. Passing by on the only major road along the coast, you wouldn't realize Aneho's size, sprawling between a lagoon and the ocean. Most people only notice the town as a drive by.

The town is a cultural stronghold itself, with a lagoon separating the older portion of town, near the chief's palace on the beach side of the

lagoon, from the newer part of town, East of the lagoon. Both sides of town are full of large drum-based orchestra groups that can reach 100 members in extreme cases.

Augustin's group reaches 80 people at its largest size, but serves in a variety of smaller components, arranged according to need and availability. These multi-generational folkloric groups serve as significant socio-economic networks for members and performance-based cultural archives serving a public function as well. As a retired civil servant that worked in the mayor's office, he is proud to have formed a successful group for his retirement.

Recording context:

Off camera Augustin leads with bell in hand, as a drummer and three women share songs as the kids fill in with vigor. A different kind of playing goes on here all the time. Here, they get to play drums and bounce on benches with smaller percussion, or waving a piece of cloth as if at a parade, around benches with the family.

The family concession serves as the home base for meetings, drum rehearsals, construction, or repair. Thus the family unit lives in an amazing space. Exposed and involved in all activities, their wonderful concession is surrounded by a small coconut grove.

It is just far enough from the side road, accessed only by a small footpath, with a spacious inner courtyard, and drums regally displayed under a large rain-shade canopy. Here three women, two men and 6 kids sing songs to share a midday break in a place quite familiar to them, their home.

Notes on Language Use:

In addition to the impressive musical talent present at young ages, the sheer volume of the lyrics that the youngest girls can follow is incredible. An oral library of lyrics develops from extensive exposure to organized rehearsals and repetition.