

# SPEECH SURROGATES OF AFRICA: A STUDY OF THE FANTE *MMENSUON*

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## Abstract

*Various forms of communication based on sounds produced by instruments are common in many African societies. Among these, the slit gong and drums are the most popular and the most widely used as speech surrogates in Africa (Nketia, 1971:700). With the introduction of participant-observation research orientation to African scholarship, new information is being discovered and structured to fill existing gaps in knowledge. The 'mmen esoun' (also spelt 'mmensoun') (meaning Seven Horns) is a speech surrogate used among the Fante of Ghana. Mmensoun has the dual capability of imitating the speaking voice and, simultaneously, serving as a musical instrument in a performance. As a speech surrogate, it functions as an effective and powerful instrument for communication. This paper introduces the communicative sounds of the mmensoun within the cultural system of the Fante, and offers a framework within which the instrument could be further investigated.*

## 1. Introduction

The literature on instruments that imitate speech texts in Africa abound (Nketia, 2005; Avins et al. 1999; Creighton, 1999; Maxwell, 1999; Kofie, 1994). Among the Akan, Ewe, Mamprusi, and the Ga of Ghana, instruments such as the talking drums (*atumpan*), double bell, slit gong, trumpets (*mmentia*) and talking trumpets (*ntahera* or *aseseben*) are commonly used. In Congo, the bowed lute (*sésé*) serves also as talking instruments (Carrington, 1949: 79), while the hourglass drum is used most frequently among the Yoruba and areas of Dagbani ancestry.

The *Godie*, a one-stringed fiddle among the Nigerians or Dahomey, assumes an almost human role in dance bands, and reproduces speech patterns and inflections note for note (Bebey, 1975: 44). The *Masengo* fiddle found in Ethiopia is also a talking instrument (ibid, 44). In Niger, because of a system of phonetic equivalences, *Djerma alghaita* players "send messages ... that can be decoded by the initiated" (ibid, 78). The Fang of South Cameroon also have the *mendjang* orchestra which consists of at least four or five xylophones; one of these xylophones played by the group leader 'converses' with the dancers. These instruments have had the benefit of more exposure to research, especially by scholars who popularised their findings.

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Ethnographical research has shown that among the Fantes, there are other instruments that are assigned the talking attributes while the drums play percussive roles in the socio-cultural context. The traditional instrument chosen for this study is the *mmensuon* because it has the capabilities of imitating speech text or the speaking voice and simultaneously serves as a musical instrument in a performance. A *mmensuon* ensemble basically consists of seven horns; namely, one *Sese*, one *ɔfar*, two *agyesoa*, two *abɔso* and one *Otu*. In the cultural context, the minimum number in an ensemble is four and the maximum ten. Apart from the *Sese* which 'speaks' clearly, all the others are supporting instruments and therefore they could be four or ten depending on the context of performance and what the players want to achieve; and the larger the number of horns in an ensemble the greater the volume of the sound and, vice versa. The groups in this study limit their instruments to the seven horns mentioned above.

The *mmensuon* are traditionally considered sacred and mostly associated with the political hierarchy of the Fantes. The *mmensuon* is deeply rooted in the culture of the Fantes to the extent that its sound expressions are perceived as representations of deeply felt sentiments.

This paper discusses the communication potential of the *mmensuon* sounds and how the interpretation of these sounds leads to an understanding of the socio-cultural life of the Fante people. The paper also sets a framework within which the instrument could be appreciated and further explored.

## **2. Background**

The Fante people constitute one of the ethnic divisions of the Akans. They can be found in the south western coastal region of Ghana (referred to as the Central Region), from *Pra* in the West to about 24km West of Accra, the current capital of Ghana. A few of them are also found in Yamoussoukro in La Côte d'Ivoire. The traditional states which make up this ethnic group include the Assin, Fante, Asebu, Efutu, and Etsi with the Fante people exercising cultural and linguistic influence over the others. This process of cultural integration is still on-going since clusters of pure Efutu, Etsi and others are still found in the Central Region. It must be noted that the main Fante state comprises Mankessim, Abura, Ekumfi, Nkusukum, Ogua (Cape Coast) and Anomabo.

## **3. Methodology**

Data was collected using qualitative research instruments. Qualitative instruments used include, focus group discussion, key informant interviews and direct observation. Interview schedules were designed and used while note-taking, tape recording, video recording and photographs were used in recording responses from the respondents.

Discussions were held with some men at the Cape Coast chief's court

and others in the town to elicit information on the history of the traditional horn ensemble among the Fantes and the intricacies involved in the practice and performance of *mmensuon* by the men horn ensemble in the cultural context. Apart from information obtained from Cape Coast, relevant information was gathered from the surrounding villages including *Mankessim*, *Budu-Atta*, *Fawmanyee*, *Gomoa Isaadze Eshrew* and *Otsew*. All these villages have professional male *mmensuon* ensembles as well as similar Fante musical traditions.

While interesting details of gender restrictions in some cultural activities may be the subject matter of another discussion, it is expedient at this point to explain that one of the major reasons for this behaviour is that some cultural items of the tradition are highly respected as religious icons. These items include major musical instruments such as the *atumpan* drum, *etwie* or snare drum, and *mmensuon*. The *Atumpan* (a double headed pair of drums), is played during ceremonial occasions by men. *Etwie* drum (snare drum) sounds like the leopard's cry. This drum is played by men to announce a terrifying message such as war, or the death of a prominent person. From oral interviews, *mmensuon* is also the prerogative of men. The *sese* (lead instrument) is said to communicate with the living, ancestors and gods; therefore, the Fante people revere it to the extent that they see women in their menses as unclean to touch these reverent instruments. They believe women would contaminate the instruments and render them ineffective, and since one could not tell when a woman was in her menses, the best thing was to forbid them from touching the *mmensuon*.

In view of this patriarchal bias, it was quite difficult initially to study the instrument especially in the chief's court where tradition is highly rooted. Consequently, a physical touch of the *mmensuon* in the chief's court was not possible but interviews and interactions were granted at the chief's palace. Furthermore, I was granted permission to participate in some training and rehearsal sessions with *okukurampon* cultural troupe *mmensuon* ensemble at Mankessim. This group was made up of school boys and girls who were practising traditional music in the contemporary context, devoid of the aforementioned rigid cultural practices. Indeed, the playing of *mmensuon* was part of their cultural studies. The group gave me the opportunity to touch, experiment with, take photographs and ask questions about the instruments without any problems.

I also observed public and private performances by both the boys and male groups. Some of the musical performances were also recorded and video taped uninterrupted at durbar grounds and at the chief's court with a drum ensemble accompanying the horn sounds. Others were recorded during a staged performance on request. The performances were followed by focus group discussions with both the performers and a cross-section of the audience to ascertain the meanings and interpretations of the text. Most often the various answers were cross-checked with some other people from the community; or I related them to the physical and

emotional behaviours observed during the performances. Consequently, rich data with regard to the sound text, context of performance, interpretation of concerned problems of aesthetic judgment, perception and values were assembled.

#### 4. The *Mmensuon* Nomenclature

The Fante language has grouped all air-blown instruments as *mmen* (plural) or *aben* (singular), which is very difficult to translate in English. The *mmen* could be trumpets, horns or flutes. They are practically air-blown instruments. Usually, it is the material used in making the instrument, the size or the number of instruments put together in an ensemble that identifies one group of *mmen* from the other; for example, *abentsia* (short horn/trumpet/flute), and *mmensuon* (seven horn/trumpet/flute).

This ambiguity has generated various definitions for the traditional horn and trumpet. Sachs (1940: 457) cited in Carter (1971) states that there is a clear-cut distinction between the horns and trumpets. According to Sachs, the horns are accurate reproductions of carved animal horns by their shape and have conical bores, whereas the trumpets are accurate reproductions of straight tubes of bamboo or branches of trees. Nketia (1958: 27) also makes a clear distinction between horns and trumpets. He indicates that horns are made of animal horns or tusks of elephants while trumpets are carved out of wood. Sibyl (1964: 244-247) defines the horn as a wind instrument initially made of animal horn or tusk of elephant and later replicated in wood or metal while trumpets are originally straight instruments made of wood, bamboo or cane.

The above definitions do not confirm the word *mmen* as used by the Fantes in this context because the *mmensuon* were originally carved out of elephant tusk, but as time went on they were carved out of wood. Mensah (1966), an indigenous Fante, refers to the *mmensuon* ensemble at Gomoa, a trumpet set, while Philip Quarcoe Girls School educators who are mostly Fantes also call the *mmensuon* ensemble, a horn ensemble. Is *mmensuon* therefore a trumpet or horn ensemble? *Mmensoun* in this paper will refer to a set of seven horns.

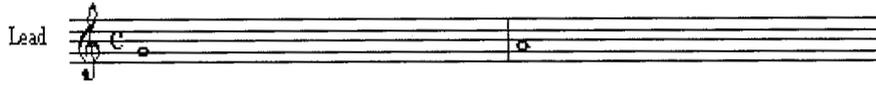
#### 5. Description

Traditionally, *Mmensuon* (7 horns) are lip-vibrated, side-blown ivory horn instruments, in various sizes of small, medium and large depending on the size of the elephant. The small horns measure approximately 35 – 40 centimeters long while the medium and large are 45 and 50 – 55 centimeters long respectively. The bigger orifice of the *mmen* tapers to a smaller end where the opening is corked. However, the lead horn has a small hole through the cork, which is at the topmost part of the smaller end. There is another opening on the concave side of all the horns.

These horns are distinguished by the names assigned them, which also reflect the role that they play in the ensemble. The smallest and high-pitched horn,

which usually plays the lead or calls the tune has been given the name *sese* and is approximately 35cm long. This horn emits two notes, G and A.

Fig 1.



Each of the other horns emits only one note. Below are the names and sizes of the rest of the horns:

Table 1.

Name	Centimeters	Size	Sound
<i>ɔfar</i>	40	Small	F
<i>Agyesoa and Aboso</i>	45	Medium	D
<i>Otu</i>	50	Big	Bb

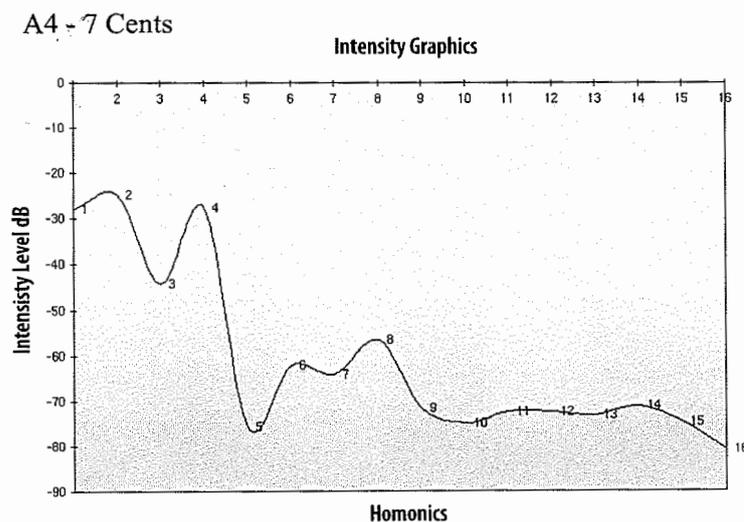


Fig 2. left: *sese* (lead), *aboso / agyesoa*, *ɔfar*, and *otu*.

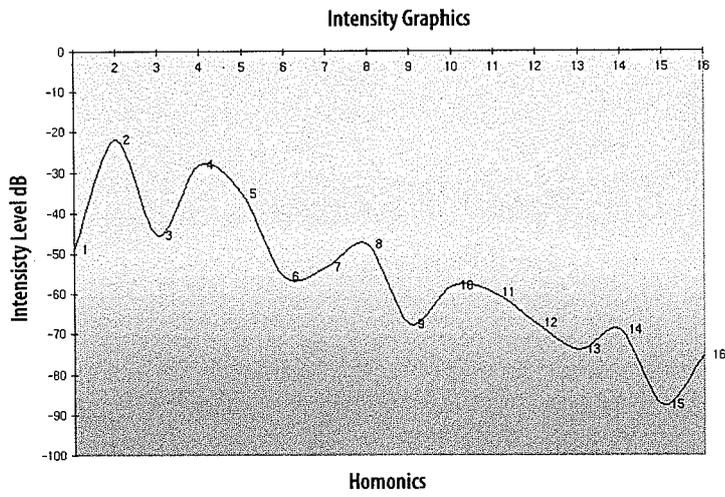
The *sese*'s larger counterpart, the *abeso*, emphasizes the *sese*'s announcing phrase with a special response; the *Ofar* repeats the *sese*'s announcing phrase; the *Agyesoa*, which has great carrying power is regarded as the signalist and time-keeper among the group. It follows with a motif designed to heighten the general effect (Mensah, 1966:82). The largest, is called *Otu*. It has the deepest tone and is regarded as the eldest of the instruments. In the view of the performers, its utterances serve as a general endorsement on the statement being made by the rest of the set.

Sometimes the biggest horn could be as long as 55cm long. From the above, it can be recognized that the difference between the three horns is 5cm. In other words, the length of the biggest horn minus the length of the medium size horn is  $50 - 45 = 5\text{cm}$ ; the length of the medium size horn minus the length of the small size horn is  $45 - 40 = 5\text{cm}$ ; and finally, the length of the small size horn minus the length of the smallest (*sese*) size horn is  $40 - 35 = 5\text{cm}$ . It can be observed that the length and size of the horn corresponds to the size of the embouchure; for instance, the smaller the horn, the smaller the embouchure. The size, length, and the embouchure accounts for the differences in the tones (pitch) of the horns.

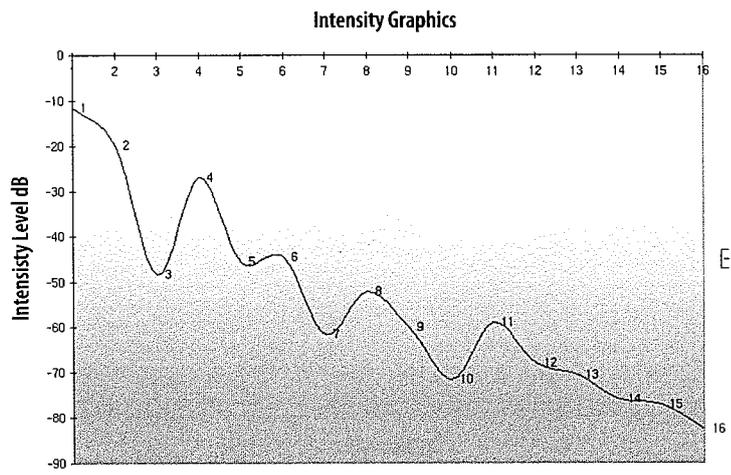
Below are the different horn sounds of the *mmensuon* ensemble and its harmonics, plus the areas of higher intensities expressed in decibel, being indicated by peaks of different contours and shades.



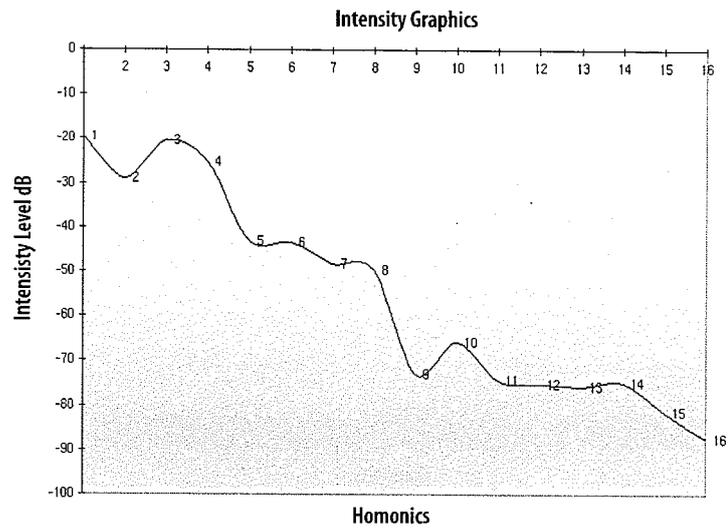
G4 - 14 Cents



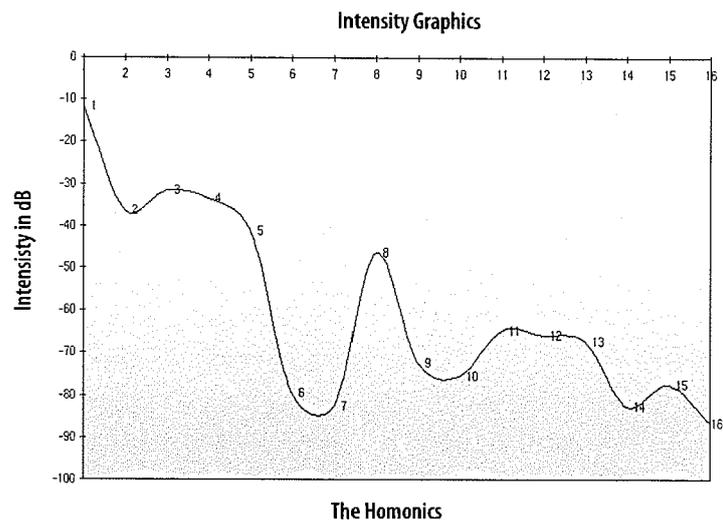
D4 + 11 Cents



F4 + 21 Cents



Bb3+ 70 Cents



(Graphics: Courtesy P. Dominic)

The beginning, modulation as well as the diminishing process of the sound in each graph are different and most of the times, they continue quite irregularly. In the case of the A and G, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> partials build up rather quickly, while the upper partials need more time to build up their full energy; in the case of F, D and Bb, the first two partials build up more slowly than the upper partials. This is the reason why the *sese*'s parts sound more clearly defined from the beginning than the supporting *mmensuon*.

In all the graphs above, the higher harmonics are relatively diminished because with *mmensuon* blowing, the pressure of air gathered in the lungs and released accounts for the periodic wave, which consists of a fundamental and its harmonics. When the performer blows hard into the horn, the vibrations increase and the fundamental and its entire harmonics also rise in pitch and sound, and afterwards die out. The reverse is the case. The researcher believes that comparatively, the pressure of air gathered and released for the G sound was more intense than that of the A sound taking into consideration partials 9 to 15 of the A sound and that of the G sound which is full of peak areas. These contours indicate that for low tones the pitch decreases with intensity, but for high tones, the pitch increases with intensity. The intensity of the fundamental and particular partials affects the quality of the sound. This is in line with Lundin, (1953:49) who states that when a musician varies the intensity of his/her produced tone, s/he varies its quality also because the greater the intensity, the more partials will be present.

Table 1. Peak or high intensity areas of the various sounds of the *mmensuon*;

Graph A4-7 cents		2	4	6	8	11	14	
Graph G4-14 cents		2	4	5	8	10	11	14
Graph D4+11 cents	1	2	4	6	8	11	13	15
Graph F4+21 cents	1	3	4	6	8	10	14	
Graph Bb3+70 cents	1	3	4	5	8	11	13	15

The figures in the boxes are the overtones of the various sounds. Overtones 4 and 8 are peak areas of all the horn sounds while overtone 1 is a peak area for D, F and Bb. Overtone 2 is also a peak area for sound A, G, and D. This implies that around these peak areas, the sound of the horn is very intense or loud in intensity. With reference to the harmonic series, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> are octaves. Therefore, it may be opined that due to the hollow shapes of the *mmensuon*, which allows the opening at one end to reflect the higher overtones and resonance when the lips are applied with the appropriate techniques, playing in octaves is the easiest and the most pronounced sound quality one could achieve in *mmensuon* sounds except the

16<sup>th</sup> partial which cannot be perceived. People who cannot stand loud sounds are usually affected at these levels where the sound is more pronounced. Sometimes unconsciously, some people get startled whilst those indigenous Fantes who are familiar with such intensities rather show signs of elation.

On the contrary, blowing softly may not be as easy as blowing loudly. The table below shows the soft or low intensity sound levels:

Table 2

Graph A4-7 cents	1	3	5	7	9	10	15
Graph G4-14 cents	1	3	6	7	9	13	15
Graph D4+11 cents		3	5	7	10	12	14
Graph F4+21 cents		2	5	7	9	11	15
Graph Bb3+70 cents		2	6	7	9	10	14

Again with reference to the harmonic series, 5<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> harmonics are weak and therefore the intensity levels are low.

This might explain why the *mmensuon* plays in hocket technique so that by alternating the notes, the various sounds would be heard properly because the attack points will vary. This hocket technique immediately creates a community in the relationship between the sounds as also practised by such instruments as the *mbira*.

## 6. Playing Technique and Sound Production

The traditional horn is played in transverse position with the thumb placed at the smaller end while air is blown through the embouchure.

A significant discovery was made when the researcher was learning how to blow into the *sese*. The carver, who is also a Fante used some specific words in teaching how to blow into *sese* – *Ka w'ano bɔdo si tokur n'ano, na huu mframa gum* (translated as, Make your lips tight, place them on the embouchure and blow hard into it). Many players position their mouth such that it covers more of the upper lip than the lower lip. The loudness of the sound that is a psychological sensation depends somehow on the mouth pressure and the manipulation of the thumb of the player. The harder s/he blows into the *mmensuon* and opens the thumb, the louder the sound produced and vice versa.

## 7. Training of Traditional *mmensuon* performers

Research findings in this study revealed that, among the Fantes, traditional music is learnt through enculturation. Looking at the techniques in blowing the horns,

one would think that *mmensuon* playing requires special training, but, the learning of *mmensuon* is not different from the learning of other traditional instruments.

Nketia (1964:4) describes how traditional musicians learn through slow absorption without formal teaching. He states that the individual is required to acquire his musical knowledge in slow stages, to widen his experience of the music of his culture through the social groups into which he is progressively incorporated and the activities in which he takes part; the young have to rely largely on their imitative ability and correction by those who this is volunteered. They must rely on their own eyes, ears and memory. They must acquire their own technique of learning.

Davis (1994:27) also states “you have to use your common sense right there to make sure that you get the patterns clean”. This is exactly how the novices of Kofi Ninsen’s professional *mmensuon* at Gomoa and other professionals learn the techniques of playing.

Among the Fantes, the traditional belief is that a genius youngster may be the reincarnation of an ancestor who was a renowned musician. Although it is taken for granted that natural endowment and a person’s ability to develop on his/her own are the requisite qualifications for becoming a *mmensuon* blower, how the skill is acquired is a personal responsibility.

The basic principle therefore remains that learning is through social experience, which is by assimilation, participation and imitation. This is based on the African worldview “that you do not teach a blacksmith’s son his father’s trade” (Nketia, 1974). Under the prevailing training tradition, the candidate’s chance of mastering a piece takes a very long time.

Due to the important role the *mmensuon* plays in society, it has survived many generations among the Fantes and has not been transformed very much. In this contemporary era, *mmensuon* is still practised in the chief’s courts in the Fante community. The greatest innovation is the fact that currently *mmensuon* has moved from the traditional courthouses and durbar grounds to institutions, theatre halls, state houses, churches and concert halls.

#### **8. The *Mmensuon* performer in Fante Community**

Traditional *mmensuon* blowers in Fanteland are of two categories; the ones attached to the courts and those associated with a particular patron. The court musicians are highly respected because of their connection to royalty. Most often a particular lineage is chosen to perform such duties.

This family lives in the chief’s palace at the expense of the chief. He feeds and clothes them as well as gives them some honorarium because their livelihood is dependent on playing music for the chief. Since they spend all their lives in the court, they are familiar with the histories of the land, the norms and

traditions governing court music making, choice of songs for each state function and many other conventions associated with court-music performance. This knowledge is therefore passed on from one generation to another. As they live in the same courtyard, they meet on several occasions to rehearse and build rapport among themselves over a long period of time. This makes them more skilful and therefore they perform with confidence and dexterity. Nketia (1963) describes similar practices concerning the Ashanti court musician.

The second category of *mmensuon* performers are individuals brought together and trained to play for commercial purposes. They move every now and then from one village to another performing during funerals and durbars. Some of these groups are found in *Isherew* and *Budu Atta*, villages in the Mankessim area.

Relatively, the court *mmensuon* performers are more skilful than the commercial performers because their experience starts from childhood through observation, imitation, creativity and in-built talent; while most commercial performers acquire knowledge at a later stage and with time leave the group for a new set of people to start all over.

### 9. *Mmensuon* Song Text and Social Sentiments

Oral tradition revealed during the field investigations (January, 2002) that the *mmensuon* plays a dual role in the cultural context. As an ensemble, *mmensuon* is a regular feature in the typical traditional court that performs in contextual situations such as traditional festivals, funerals, durbars and anniversaries.

Apart from its musical capability, the lead horn (*sese*) is used in the court as a talking instrument for recounting histories, singing appellations, uttering proverbs, and conveying messages, announcements and signals depending on the context. The *sese*'s textual content is highly idiomatic and proverbial, just as the Fante language it imitates. It takes an insider (in this case the indigenous people) to decode these expressions since the meanings of the horn sound are governed by agreed principles within the tradition; therefore, people outside the tradition would find it difficult to interpret and understand them.

Wherever it features in any occasion, ceremonial or occasional, the *mmensuon*'s role is that of a speech surrogate as well as a vehicle to convey the social sentiments of the Fantes. The first example is illustrated by the following text of the *sese*'s trumpeting during the burial of a prominent chief at Mankessim as observed. The *sese* leads the way to the cemetery as it trumpets:

*Duei oo o*  
*Nana brɛbre*

Sorry oo o  
Chief slowly.

The interpretation given was that culturally chiefs are not supposed to walk briskly. They do things majestically when they are alive; therefore, when they die the same sentiment is expressed to even the dead body.

A similar performance takes place at other Fante courthouses during funeral occasions as told by the entire major informants. Another example can be mentioned of *Pata*, a dirge at the Borbor Abora's chief's court which has the text as follows;

<i>Ɔye a wonsu mu</i>	Hold it well
<i>Ma ɔnnka famu</i>	So it does not touch the ground
<i>Ode me pata rebuo</i>	He says my hut is breaking
<i>Ɔye a wonsu mu</i>	Hold it well
<i>Ma ɔnnka famu ara o</i>	So it does not touch the ground
<i>Ɔye a wonsu mu o</i>	Hold it well
<i>Ma ɔnnka famu oo</i>	So it does not touch the ground

Among the Fantes, it is a taboo for a chief to fall down whether dead or alive. The chief is very important to the community, and that feeling of affection is expressed through the *mmensuon* song text even to the dead body.

At the Borbor Abora chief's court, the *mmensuon* plays appellations with some provocative implications when the chief or queen mother is going to a durbar ground for example,

<i>Ɔhen na ɔreko no, brebre</i>	The chief is going, slowly
<i>Ɔhembraa na ɔreko no, brebre</i>	The queen mother is going, slowly
<i>Kwansaba Kweku</i>	Kwansaba Kweku ei
<i>Ɔhembraa na ɔreko no, brebre</i>	The queen mother is going, slowly
<i>Ɔhen na ɔreko no, brebre</i>	The chief is going, slowly

There are two versions of interpretation to the text above. It reflects two different social sentiments about dress codes in the society. The interpretation given at Cape-Coast was that when the sub chiefs are attending a durbar, each one wants to look his or her best even though they all appear in their traditional *Kente* clothes, which is the norm. Among the chiefs, dressing appropriately then is a competition. This song implied that a particular chief's dressing befitted the office; thus, the praise "there goes a chief or queen". The text was at the same time interpreted as mocking the other chiefs who were not as elegantly dressed as the one being praised. The point at issue is not the correctness of the interpretation of a particular version, but rather the nature of the social sentiments expressed in each version.

*Mmensuon* ensemble also imitates the text below, which has some provocative implications. Kofi Ninsen's *mmensuon* group, which is attached to the Gomoa Fawowmaye's chief's court as well as a professional group that moves from one village to another, performed this song at a durbar.

<i>Ɔye wo asem ben?</i>	Is it your palaver?
<i>Ɔfa wo ho ben?</i>	Does it concern you?
<i>M'edzi me Nana n'adze a</i>	If I've inherited my grandparent
<i>Ɔye wo asem ben?</i>	Is it your palaver?
<i>Ɔfa wo ho ben?</i>	Does it concern you?

Most often, among the Akans, chiefs are selected from a particular lineage just as *mmensuon* performers are chosen from a particular lineage. Therefore, the stool is passed on from one generation to another. However, when there is a polygamous marriage at a particular point in time of a chief's tenure, confusion arises as to which of the two wives' son is to inherit the throne after the death of their uncle. In the midst of such inheritance controversies, jealousies and hatred occur among the wives and children. This situation also sometimes happens to any other person in the community who has inherited some property that is shrouded in controversy. This text expresses social tendencies such as hatred, anger and jealousies of this nature.

Festivals and traditional customs also have songs that express the feeling of joy and happiness. When the chief is carried in the palanquin dancing on the streets of Cape Coast during festivals and other durbars, the procession sing and dance to the music being performed by the various musical groups. The *mmensuon* also sing eulogies as well as express the social sentiments that the people share as they celebrate the festival.

<i>Nana Krampa bɔkɔɔ</i>	Chief Krampa, slowly.
<i>Yee yee bɔkɔɔ</i>	Okay, okay slowly.

On the other hand, *mmensuon* song texts also serve as a means of advice to the community people. A typical example is a song text by the Gomoa Budu-Atta, *mmensuon* ensemble that goes as follows.

<i>Me da me dabi ara a</i>	I sleep my style of sleep
<i>Mewu nda mu</i>	I die in sleep
<i>Kofi Ninsin e!</i>	Kofi Ninsen!
<i>Meda me dabi e!</i>	I sleep my sleep!
<i>Mewu nda mu a</i>	I die in sleep
<i>Abowa ɔnanka</i>	Reptile serpent

The interpretation given to this song by Opanyin Kweku Edu of the chief's court at Budu-Atta was that God made man to work before he could get a means of living. If one decides not to work but make it a habit to lazy about or sleep a lot, there is no way that person could get a means of survival. Therefore, everybody should rise up and work. Usually, when the ensemble is performing some musical pieces in the area of concern such as implicit provocation as the one above, the actual name of the person implied is not mentioned; however, the name of any of the performers is mentioned instead. In the example given above, the name of the leader of the group that is Kofi Ninsen was used instead.

Another example of such implicit *mmensuon* song is the one below:

<i>Gyangɔsɔ, enye woana bɔgɔr?</i>	Old woman who will you play with?
<i>Ihu fie bowa a erasa hɔn</i>	When you see a family, you dislike the person.
<i>Ihu ham bowa a eresar hɔn</i>	When you see a visitor, you dislike the person.
<i>Gyangɔsɔ, enye woana bɔgɔr?</i>	Old woman who will you play with?

This is a story of an old woman who was picking quarrels with anybody who came into contact with her and therefore she was not on talking terms with almost all the people around her. Then one day the inevitable happened and she fell ill. Who will care for her needs? The underlying issue is to be nice to everybody and live at peace with your neighbours.

Outside the court, the *mmensuon* serves purely as a means of entertainment. They perform at funerals to console the bereaved families, which, most often ends up evoking tears in the eyes of those who are assembled. This affection that could be viewed on the level of aesthetic consciousness is partly due to the text of the pieces performed and greatly due to the tone of the instrument at that particular time which was able to depict an atmosphere of sorrow.

The *mmensuon* texts effectively communicate the deeply felt sentiments that are embraced in the sociocultural setup of the Fantes. Due to the important role the *mmensuon* plays in society, it has survived many generations among the Fantes and has not been transformed very much. In this contemporary era, *mmensuon* is still practised in the chief's courts in the Fante community. The greatest innovation is the fact that currently *mmensuon* has moved from the traditional courthouses and durbar grounds to institutions, theatre halls, state houses, churches and concert halls.

#### **10. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation**

The double role of the *mmensuon* signifies the use of *mmensuon* as a communication tool to express various forms of social sentiments and as a musical instrument for ceremonial purposes and currently for recreation.

Horn sound also depicts what the Fantes know from their observational and practical experiences during their journey to the current habitat through the tribal wars they fought both successful and failed ones, their interaction with their neighbours, as well as deeply rooted cultural values. Since *mmensuon* is associated with the courts and was the preserve of brave and “holy” men, many of the themes reflect the historical origins, ancestors, wars, appellations, social vices, messages or signals, beliefs and eulogies.

The article revealed that Fantes conceptualize *mmensuon* sounds as speech surrogates and therefore the sounds are conventionally associated with the language. They are composed with deliberate goal in mind. For example in the context of death, the horn sound is organized deliberately to evoke that mood. This explains why the *mmensuon* sounds are powerful tools for the communication of sentiments.

*Mmensuon* texts are also a means through which Fantes communicate with the purpose of controlling social vices. The totality of *mmensuon* performance is the core of Fante aesthetics because it has the unique power to evoke and express social sentiments. *Mmensuon* song texts can therefore serve as a solid foundation for sociocultural studies in the Central Region, and appropriated in other civic educational contexts.

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