

EBO TAYLOR – APPIA KWA BRIDGE / STRUT089

Track notes and background

AYESAMA

“The war song of the Fante Akans, a song of victory.”

A traditional Fante warrior song, chanting, taunting the enemy. “What’s your mother’s name?” Ebo makes regular trips to listen to traditional songs from Fante elders and fishermen on the Cape Coast. Classic Taylor songs like ‘Atwer Abroba’ are based on these traditions. “I want to preserve these songs, keep the old stories and melodies alive through my music.”

‘Ayesama’ was originally recorded in Berlin during the sessions for the ‘Love And Death’ album in 2010 but was not released at the time. A new version of the song was recorded in October 2011 after it had become a popular staple within Ebo’s live sets.

ABONSAM

“The Devil must be blamed for all the evil in the world. Let us seek God’s protection.”

A new song written by Ebo, performed in 6 / 8 timing, ‘Abonsam’ sings of ‘The Devil’ and how he is responsible for all of the bad things that happen in the world. If you follow Christ, you will be saved.

NSU NA KWAN

“The river is older than the foot path which is man-made. The river was made by God and it is the oldest.”

A track speaking in ancient proverbs, which talks of the river and the old road - which one is older, which came first? ‘Nsu’ means ‘water’, ‘Kwan’ is ‘stone’. The message: respect God’s creations, respect and honour your elders.

YAA AMPONSAH

“One of the oldest highlife songs which praises the beauty of a woman.”

A Ghanaian standard and one of the first highlife songs, originally recorded by Jacob Sam’s Sam’s Trio in 1928. The lyrics speak of an exceptionally beautiful woman and, outrageously, the singer asks her to divorce her husband to be with him.

Within his album, Ebo wants to showcase the full range of Ghanaian music and the two acoustic tracks (‘Yaa Amponsah’ and ‘Barrima’) reference the roots of highlife and showcase the basic guitar styles. Taylor would play ‘Yaa Amponsah’ in a different form as a staple during

his time with Broadway Dance Band and Apagya Show Band and it remains a special song for him.

KRUMAN DEY

“A nursery rhyme, believed to have been composed by a lunatic in Saltpond, my home town on the Cape coast.”

Sung by Henry Taylor, Ebo’s son. ‘Kruman’ originates from the 1930s / ‘40s and refers to the Krumen ethnic group, traditionally hailing from Liberia and Ivory Coast. With a reputation as sailors, they were seen by Ghanaians as strong people but many took on menial jobs in Ghana. The lyrics are slightly mocking: “there’s a Kruman!” and the song was often used to teach children to count one to ten – “one kruman dey, two kruman dey...”.

The track was recorded previously during Ebo’s time with Apagya Show Band during the mid-‘70s under the title ‘Serwa Brakatu’. Ebo calls this one of his ‘Deep Purple’ tracks with the bass and guitar playing the same lines, a very Western technique.

APPIA KWA BRIDGE

“In Saltpond, this is a small bridge that connects the two parts of the town and also provides a vital link to the local hospital. It is a known rendez-vous for lovers at night. My first woman in Saltpond met me on this bridge for our maiden date.”

“The song says, “meet me at the Appia Kwa Bridge, tonight at the same old place.” It mentions people’s names – there are three nightclubs situated very near the bridge, one of which is owned by a lady called Auntie Jo.” The song mentions Auntie Jo watching the bridge, seeing who goes back and forth, and imagines people meeting there - “Flash me and we can meet at the bridge”. “There is no light there at night and kids go there and make out,” Ebo explains. “The name sounds big but it’s really a tiny bridge – it amuses people in the town.”

BARRIMA

“I wrote this song to express my sorrow for the death of my first wife, Selina.”

Ebo married his first wife whilst living in the UK but she would eventually leave him, struggling to cope with the hardships that had come from a life in music. Ebo had previously written the song ‘Love And Death’ about her. He wrote this song following her death in August 2011 and recorded it in Lovelite, Berlin, in October. Performed in one take, he thought about the song during the two week sessions and recorded it during the last day in the studio with tears in his eyes.

The chorus says, “Man don’t cry – Ebo Kobena is a man and he is crying. (Kobena – Ebo’s real name - means Tuesday). The style is a Fante form, Odonso, with no firm structure – it plays as a flowing improvisation, musically and lyrically and is often used for narrative songs which tell stories.