

2007 Ghana Tour
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Ghana Tour – 2007
Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges

Introduction

From January 13-23, 2007, a group of 40 Haverford and Bryn Mawr students and faculty traveled to the country of Ghana in West Africa for an inter-cultural exchange tour that was tied to a series of performances by the Chamber Singers of Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges shared with local Ghanaian choirs.

This trip represented a remarkable collaboration by an unusually diverse representation of the bi-college community:

- 12 students and one faculty member were from Bryn Mawr, the rest being from Haverford;
- all three academic divisions were represented by students, faculty, and special projects on the tour: Humanities (music, religion), Social Sciences (history, Africana Studies), and Natural Sciences (biology)
- the traveling group represented significant racial and ethnic diversity (including 15 students and faculty of African origin, 5 of Asian origin, 3 of Hispanic origin, 5 of Jewish heritage, and 13 others);
- 90% of the cost of the \$104,300 cost of the tour was funded by nine different funding sources within the two colleges, with the remainder by the students themselves.

This venture also represented a significant effort to integrate experiential and academic learning within the curriculum. While many of the students on the tour were registered for one course, MUSCH214 – Chamber Singers, all students participating in the tour took part in a common syllabus of required reading and writing assignments along with public panel discussions and other special events (as documented in this report).

After the trip, in addition to another series of public events through which the students shared the experience of the trip with the wider community, there were 17 enrollments in Africana Studies courses directly related to the topics covered on the trip. Two biology students will be returning to Ghana this summer to lead a lab techniques workshop with graduate students they met during the trip, and some students in other fields, such as economics, made Ghana the focus of their term papers.

This journey also represented an opportunity to bring visibility to the international studies programs of both colleges through national media coverage of the tour in Ghana, the presence of the US Ambassador to Ghana at two of the tour events celebrating the 50th anniversary of Ghana's independence, and contacts made with several Ghanaian chiefs and other citizens with children or relatives who have attended Haverford and Bryn Mawr.

As we hope you will see from this report and its student and faculty reflections, traveling with a group of fellow students on a trip involving significant interaction with peer groups in another culture is a unique and multi-dimensional educational experience. As attested to by the students on the trip who were not in the Chamber Singers, the musical performance aspect of the trip provided a valuable entry point and lubrication for social and intellectual interaction. This allowed the students to attain an extraordinary level of comfort in an unfamiliar culture within a short period of time.

Being with a group of faculty and fellow students who were both diverse and supportive enabled a level of personal reflection both during and after the trip that is in many ways unique to this kind of experience. This was especially powerful for students in this racially mixed group when confronting issues of racism in response to close exposure to some of the historical artifacts of slavery. In the context of the pressing unresolved issues of race that have come to the fore again recently on both campuses, the way our students conducted themselves during a very intense experience together gives us great cause for hope.

Lastly, let me convey the deeply felt personal thanks of all the students and faculty involved in this trip for Haverford and Bryn Mawr's support of this complex and challenging project. A venture such as this would have simply not been possible without your faith and budgetary support. We of course welcome your questions, comments, and suggestions. We sincerely hope this project will be a positive model for future efforts in collaborative, cross-disciplinary experiential learning on the international level at Haverford and Bryn Mawr in the years to come.

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Preparation for Ghana Trip – Fall Semester 2006

Required readings (available through Blackboard):

Students were required to read each of the following articles and submit a response to the questions following each reading by the date indicated, to be read by different members of the faculty leadership team.

[for Monday, October 9] Williams, Alex, “Into Africa,” *New York Times* (Sunday Style Section, front page), August 13, 2006.

Question #1: Based on this article, and looking ahead to our trip, describe at least one way our trip could become exploitative of Africa and one way our trip could ultimately be productively supportive of Africa.

[for Monday, October 23] Meredith, Martin, *The Fate of Africa – From the hopes of freedom to the heart of despair: A History of 50 years of Independence* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005); Introduction and Chapter 10: “Feet of Clay,” pp. 1-14, 179-192.

Question#2 (Introduction): Discuss two or three specific effects the European partition and occupation of Africa had on the continent.

Questions #3 (Chapter 10 - Feet of Clay): What were some of the special major challenges facing Ghana's first independent government under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah?

[for Monday, November 13] Bailey, Anne C., *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade – Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005); Chapter 5: “European and American Agency in the Atlantic Slave Trade: From Raid and Trade to Operational Breakdown,” pp. 115-151.

Question #4: The slave trade in West and Central Africa was a highly structured, organized, and complex system. Provide a capsulated overview of this system, its agents, and its impact on African and European societies.

[for Monday, November 20] Horton, Richard, “Ghana: Defining the African Challenge,” *The Lancet*, vol. 358, December 21/29, 2001, pp. 2141-2149.

Question #5: What factors affect the general susceptibility to disease in Ghana?

Question #6: Explain the relationship between social class and the use of health services.

[for Monday, December 4] Agawu, Kofi, *Representing African Music – Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (New York: Routledge, 2003), Chapter 1: “Colonialism’s impact,” pp. 1-22.

Question #7: What is Agawu’s position on what music can be called authentically “Ghanaian” music in the wake of the impact of colonialism? Explain why you would agree or disagree with his assessment.

Films and discussion:

shown September 16 – Chamber Singers retreat:

Listening to the silence [VHS] : a film about African cross rhythms as seen through Ghanaian music / written and produced by Peter Bischoff ; Loke Film Publisher Princeton, NJ : Films for the Humanities & Sciences, c1996; shows origins of African cross rhythms in daily life of Ghanaian adults and children.

Dance like a river [VHS] : [Odadaa! drumming and dancing in the U.S.] Publisher [Washington, D.C. : Oboade Institute of African Culture] ; Bloomington, IN : Indiana University Audio-Visual Center, [distributor, c1985]; exploration of Ghanaian musician Jacob Addy and his attempts to draw more attention to traditional music in Ghana by gaining recognition in America through tours with his group Odadaa.

Panel discussions (required for all participants – open to community as well):

November 6 – Prof. Iruka Okeke (HC biology), Prof. Kalala Ngalamulume (BMC history), and Joel Kwabi HC '07 share their experiences growing up in Africa and then coming to America as young adults.

November 20 - John Duronville HC '07 and Tiffany Shumate BMC '08 share some of their experiences traveling to Ghana on the tri-co trip in January 2006.

December 4 - Detailed discussion of the tour itinerary, packing, and guidelines, signed off by students individually before they left. Dean Sunni Tolbert and Prof. Tracey Hucks lead a discussion on social customs, behavior, and expectations in Ghana.

note: these discussions were videotaped and then made available to students studying abroad through streaming video on Blackboard.

Preparation of African songs by students in Chamber Singers to perform with local choirs in Ghana:

Ephraim Amu - *Akwaaba Dwom* (Twi)
 Newlove Annan – *Nhyira* (Twi)
 Barima Asumadu Sakyi – *Bra Israel Nyame* (Twi)
 Barima Asumadu Sakyi - *Mafa Jesu* (Twi)
 Henry Gyasi – *Dinpa Sen Ahonya* (Twi)
 E. Pappoe Thompson - *Miye Gbomo Ko* (Ga)
 Walter K. Blege - *Ebge Enye* (Ewe)
 Robert G. K. Ndo – *Dumedefo* (Ewe)

Other songs in African languages prepared for the tour:

Alberto Grau (Venezuela) – *Kasar mie la Gaji* (Swahili)

Thomas Lloyd – *Stan' Still, Jordan / Egbe Nukpowo* (Ewe) – written for this tour; now under consideration by Alliance Music and ECSchirmer for publication.

Public performance and presentation:

December 14, 2006 – Founders Great Hall at Haverford

Chamber Singers Annual Holiday Concert: *A Celebration of Kwanzaa*

(see attached program); The Chamber Singers perform their complete tour program, made up of African songs and African-American Spirituals, interspersed with other students going on the tour reading reflections on the seven principles of the African-American celebration of Kwanzaa.

Questions for written responses during plane trip to Ghana:

1. Did you gain any new perspectives about Africa generally or Ghana in particular from your preparation this semester?
2. You will be meeting a good number of Ghanaian students your own age on this trip. How do you imagine their daily life might be similar or different from yours?
3. How do you think it will feel for you traveling from a country which is predominantly white to one that is predominantly black?
4. Are there ways in which you think music (of all kinds) might play a different role in their lives than in ours?
5. What preconceptions do you think our Ghanaian hosts will have about us before we arrive?
6. How do you hope they will think of us after we leave?

Additional recommended readings:

Foreign aid in Africa:

Kristoff, Nicholas, moderator: Center for Foreign Relations panel discussion on “Foreign aid and developing countries,” with William Easterly, Clay Lowery, Steven Radelet, Arvind Subramanian, May 12, 2006, from the Federal News Service, Inc.

Traditional village and community life in Ghana:

Appiah, Kwame Anthony, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992).

McCaskie, T.C., *Asante Identities: History and Modernity in an African Village, 1850-1950* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

Modern life in Ghana:

Appiah, Kwame Anthony, "The Case for Contamination," *New York Times Magazine*, January 1, 2006.

Polgreen, Lydia, "Ghana's Uneasy Embrace of Slavery's Disapora," *New York Times*, December 27, 2005.

History of slavery and colonialism:

Bailey, Anne C., *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade – Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005).

French, Howard W., *A Continent for the Taking – The Tragedy and Hope of Africa* (New York: Random House, 2004).

Meredith, Martin, *The Fate of Africa – From the hopes of freedom to the heart of despair: A History of 50 years of Independence* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005).

Fictional representations of legacy of slave trade:

Haley, Alex, *Roots*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976).

Morrison, Toni, *Beloved* (New York: Random House, 1987).

Walker, Alice, *The Color Purple* (London: Women's Press, 1983)

African music:

Agawu, Kofi, *African Rhythm – A Northern Ewe Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995).

Agawu, Kofi, *Representing African Music – Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

Nketia, J. H. Kwabena, *African Music in Ghana* (Chicago: Northwestern UP, 1963).

Narrative of Haverford/Bryn Mawr Ghana tour – January 13-23, 2007

Overview

From January 13-23, 2007, a group of 40 Haverford and Bryn Mawr students and faculty traveled to the country of Ghana in West Africa for an inter-cultural exchange tour that was tied to a series of performances by the Chamber Singers of Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges shared with local Ghanaian choirs.

In addition to 27 students from the Chamber Singers, and their director, Associate Professor of Music Thomas Lloyd, there were 3 Mellon-Mays fellows from Haverford, 3 Africana-studies concentrators from Haverford and Bryn Mawr, and two students of Haverford biology professor Iruka Okeke who will be returning to Ghana with her this summer for a special laboratory techniques workshop at the University of Ghana, Legon. One of the students, Haverford senior Joel Kwabi, is a citizen of Ghana, and Bryn Mawr senior Tiffany Shumate re-connected with her Ghanaian father's side of her family as well.

The combined group of 35 students happened to be quite a diverse group as well; one third of the students were from Bryn Mawr; in terms of ethnic and racial background, ten of the students were of African descent, five each of East Asian and Jewish descent, and three Latin-American. Their ability to be both open and supportive of each other through an intense week of experiences which touched profound issues of racial identity and conflict was both moving and impressive to see.

Other faculty accompanying the students were Haverford Associate Professor of Religion and Africana Studies Tracey Hucks, Bryn Mawr Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies Kalala Ngalamulume, Haverford Dean of Multicultural Affairs and International Students Sunni Green Tolbert, and Haverford Program Director of the Office of Multicultural Affairs and International Students Samantha Ivery. While this was the first bi-college musical trip to Ghana, two smaller groups of tri-college Mellon-Mays fellows had traveled to Ghana in the last few years, and the OMAIS hopes to continue to the Ghana connection in future years. The bi-co travelers were also joined by Professor Bonnie Dill, Chair of Women's Studies at the University of Maryland (her expenses were funded entirely by her university) who made valuable contributions as part of the leadership team.

The Haverford and Bryn Mawr travelers were supported by grants from Bryn Mawr College, the Haverford Center for Peace and Global Citizenship, the Haverford Office of Multicultural Affairs and International Students, the bi-college Choral and Vocal Studies Program, the offices of the Provost and the President at Haverford, the John B. Hurford '60 Humanities Center at Haverford, and the bi-college Africana Studies program.

The trip itself

Leaving Haverford and Bryn Mawr by bus for the Philadelphia Airport at 2:30 on Saturday afternoon, January 13, the group flew to Ghana on Lufthansa Airlines with stops in Frankfurt, Germany and Lagos, Nigeria. After almost a full day and night of traveling, they were greeted with Ghanaian hospitality just before leaving the airport terminal in Accra by Mama Adokuwa-Asigble IV (known as “Mama Asigble”), the Paramount Queen (Queen mother) of the Tefle Traditional Area in the Volta Region of Ghana (and Founder of the Tema Royal School and a member of the National Commission for Civic Education in Ghana), Mr. Yaw Kyei-manu (father of Swarthmore alumnus Frank Kyei-manu SW ’06, who made all the local arrangements for this and two prior tri-co tours), and Mrs. Theresa Kwabi (mother of Haverford senior Joel Kwabi). This was the first spontaneous opportunity for song by the Chamber Singers – after not having sung together for four weeks over the winter break, they quickly chimed in with a brisk rendition of “Egbe Enye,” a song in Ewe meaning “this is the day, the glorious day – let us be glad and rejoice in it.”

We were then led to our two tour busses to meet our drivers, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Charles who would not only skillfully navigate the challenges of city traffic in Accra and miles of difficult roads in the countryside, but teach us a great deal about the homeland they loved.

Monday

After a late-night dinner of typical Ghanaian dishes at the hotel and a tentative first night sleep, the first day was devoted to visiting a primary school in an outside district of Accra. The students had been connected to the school by an American student from New Orleans, Frances Olajide, who became friends with Bryn Mawr student Tiffany Shumate during a semester at Bryn Mawr following the devastation Hurricane Katrina, and then spent a semester abroad in Ghana. First we stopped by a school supply store to purchase a large batch of pencils, notebooks and other items that had been requested by the school through Frances, who had volunteered as a tutor there during her semester in Ghana.

Finding the school (named La Yahoushua) itself proved more of a challenge, as we circled around and around, asking directions several times, before finding a dirt road that led to an open school yard with two long school buildings, one for the upper and one for the lower grades. We expected to find a carpentry project waiting for us: enough lumber to build a number of new bookshelves for the school library in time for the “Book Bombing Africa” project that Frances and Tiffany were involved in, only to find that signals had gotten crossed and there were no materials and no carpenter to lead the building. Rather than just leaving our supplies without interacting with the children, we asked if we could share some music with the students.

Their teachers welcomed this suggestion, and led about two hundred upper school students outside to greet us. We sang a couple of our African songs and African-American spirituals and then asked if the students would sing for us, knowing that singing is an important part of Ghanaian culture and education. We were not disappointed, as the children sang a two of their traditional school songs with great gusto.

Then, before we left to meet the younger children at the lower school, one of the teachers asked if we would be willing make a more formal “presentation” of the school supplies. After placing the boxes on a table and saying a few words, we were impressed by a very self-possessed boy who stood up to accept the supplies on behalf of his fellow students with totally unprepared remarks that could have come out of the mouths of his elders (see DVD). Everyone applauded enthusiastically as we left with a new appreciation of the pride and discipline of Ghanaian education (and also hoping that the invasion of their schoolyard by two busloads-full of American college students had not been too much of a disruption to their day!)

Singing for the little children on the other side of the schoolyard of course brought smiles to all of our faces, as an even larger group of children listened to every word we sang. They also had school songs to share with us, including a final “marching” song which sent them gaily back to their classrooms.

We finished the day by visiting the other end of the educational system in Ghana, the University at Legon in the heart of Accra. There we were given an introduction to Ghanaian history and culture by Professor Takyimaa Manuh, chair of African Studies and a member of the history faculty for 30 years. Greeting us at the end of a long day, she said she heard we had some singers among us, and so would we help lift her spirits with a song? Sitting around the seminar table, we sang Moses Hogan’s arrangement of “This Little Light of Mine,” which seemed to be just the support Prof. Manuh needed to share with us her breadth of perspective about her country’s rich history, including an explanation of how the tribal system had been strengthened and endured by being a matrilineal succession through the Queen Mother rather than the Chief. Afterwards, she invited us to be her guests at her home at the end of the week, along with a group of her students.

After another late dinner at the hotel, we met in small groups for the first time to begin to process all the sights and sounds of the unfamiliar culture we were now immersed in. The students had been preparing all semester for the trip through assigned readings, films, and panel discussions with African faculty and students as well as with American students who had recently visited Ghana. The Chamber Singers had struggled to learn several songs in the African languages of Twi, Ewe, and Ga that were sent by fax or email from the choirs in Ghana they would soon share concerts with.

Tuesday

The next day we were taken to the Okomfo Anolye Sword Site in Accra. Legend has it that the Asante Cheif Komfo Anolye planted this sword in the 17th Century and declared that the kingdom would remain until the sword was removed. The site is now imbedded in a hospital. Visiting the site involved walking through an open ward for elderly patients, at which point the Chamber Singers sang two of their African songs.

The first such concert was to be in Kumasi, the second largest city in Ghana and the seat of the Asante kingdom, the largest tribal association in Ghana. The bus ride to Kumasi took us on a long two-lane highway that went through many villages along the way. The

housing in the villages seemed very basic to our Western eyes, but we were also impressed by the comfortable interaction of people in the villages. At various points along the highway, women and some men would carry large bowls, baskets, or crates on their heads, full of fresh fruits, cooked items, snacks, or water to sell to travelers.

We had our first full encounter with traditional Ghanaian bartering when we stopped to visit the Kente Cloth Weaving Bazaar in the town of Bonwire, just outside Kumasi. We had been prepared for this in our panel discussions back home, but the reality was still something of a jolt in this intensified situation. Most traditional weaving is done by individuals in homes and then sold through distributors. But this one large barn-like structure was set up by the government for visitors to see the weavers at work and buy various cloths right there where they were being woven.

Outside the building were a number of teens aggressively offering to sell a number of local items to the mostly Western tourists who stopped by. (The spot was otherwise very unassuming – off the road with no paved driveway with minimal signage or other indication of being a tourist destination.) Bargaining inside was an art that most of us needed coaching for by our sympathetic bus drivers, who wanted to help support the local artisans (most of whom they knew personally) and the village economy while also helping us to reach a fair price.

We went on to visit the King's Palace Museum in Kumasi. On the grounds of the historic palace of the King of the Kumasi, the elder guide gave a sharp and sometimes wry account of how the matrilineal succession of the Kings through their mothers kept the succession from becoming weakened as had happened to some other international monarchies. We questioned later the importance given to some of the displays of swords and guns which were important instruments of the slave trade in which the early Asante rulers participated (and which was never mentioned during the tour). He seemed to enjoy speaking to a group of American students. We thanked him at the end by singing a couple of our songs that were in Twi, the language of the Asante, which brought him and some of his elder colleagues great bemusement.

From there we went on to the Kumasi Cultural Center for our first rehearsal with a Ghanaian choir, the Amaneresu Youth Choir, directed by Francis Adjei. We first sang pieces from our own repertoire and then came together to rehearse two African songs they had sent us: "Mafa Jesu" and "Bra Israel Nyame." This involved not only some singing lessons, but dancing lessons (see DVD) as well.

Wednesday

The concert that night in Kumasi was quite an event. There were several large groups of schoolchildren in their uniforms who were brought to the concert as well as many adults who came on their own. The performance began with a traditional African dance and drumming troupe who gave a riveting performance for about a half-hour, at the end of which members of our group were encouraged individually to come join in the dancing.

The concert itself was full of speeches and alternating performances by the choirs both separately and together. A notable presence was that of a TV cameraman (from a national station), who roamed around throughout the concert, even coming up on stage right up to the singers at times, all of which was taken in stride by everyone at hand (see DVD). The concert ended as apparently most Ghanaian concerts do, with the singing of the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s *Messiah*, which I was invited to conduct. This is an obvious carryover from the colonial era, when English music teaching methods and repertoire were dominant.

But as with many outside influences, whether from Europe or other African countries, the Ghanaians have a way of making such influences “their own.” In this case, the chorus was sung much more vigorously than it would be in Europe or America, and immediately after it, the small rhythm section (electric keyboard and traditional drums) broke out into “High-life” music (a version of “Mafa Jesu” which we had sung earlier) while everyone on stage and in the audience started dancing. This went on for another half-hour or more, through a number of up-tempo High-life songs.

Our hotel in Kumasi was a somewhat different environment than our hotel in more prosperous Accra. There were quite a few vendors waiting for us at the hotel in the morning and evening, and employees of the hotel slept overnight in the hallways and stairways of the hotel. Once we were assured of the security of the students and began interacting more with the vendors and employees, we were given some first-hand insight into another aspect of the economic situation in Ghana.

Thursday

The next day, we were scheduled to visit the famous Obusai gold mines, but we decided instead to take time for a large group meeting to talk about the experiences of the previous day. Prof. Hucks talked about how bartering was an inherently more relational form of commerce than found in Western culture, where there is little genuine contact between the merchant and consumer. She also stressed the importance of “material culture” for the Asante – how the weaving patterns and colors of the Kente cloth had important symbolic meaning for the people and the royal culture that stood as historical foundation for tribal identity. Prof. Ngalamulume filled in the gaps of Asante history that had been intentionally avoided in the talk at the Palace Museum, especially related to Asante methods of dominance over other tribes and its major role in the international slave trade.

We then left our hotel to visit what we expected would be a small representation from the court of the Chief of the Assin Kushea Traditional Area. Along the way, we had another spontaneous encounter, this time with families who worked on a cocoa plantation across the road from a rest stop along the highway. Our second bus driver, Mr. Charles, had suggested that we cross the road to visit them while the long line was waiting for the rest rooms. He asked them for us if they would like to hear our songs in thanks for allowing us to visit, which they graciously agreed to (see DVD). There were families from two different tribes, one who spoke Twi and the other Ewe, so we were able to share songs in both languages.

Earlier in the day, the busses had gone ahead from Kumasi while Mr. Kyei-manu stayed behind to wrap up a few details of our visit. However, this meant that at one point we needed to stop the busses to wait for Mr. Kyei-manu to catch up to us and show us the directions for the last leg of the journey. We stopped across the street from an elementary school (the Asempanaye Catholic Primary/JSS school in Assin Fosu).

When the wait went on for longer than expected without word from Mr. Kyei-manu (it turned out he had missed seeing us and unintentionally passed us by), we noticed that many of the school children had come out on the porch and were looking over at us. I asked one of our bus drivers, Mr. Morgan, if we should offer to visit with them. The two of us walked up and introduced ourselves. The teachers seemed genuinely eager to invite us in, so we emptied the busses and had a singing exchange similar to the one we had had two days before in Accra. First we sang (and were sung to) by the littlest children, and then the older children were brought into a large classroom to have a similar exchange. We were then given a tour of the library, and several of the students interacted and even played a little soccer with the children out in front of the school (it was almost time for their dismissal). After a long visit we said our good-byes (see the closing credits picture on the DVD, with the children in the green uniforms) as Mr. Kyei-manu finally caught up with us.

We then went on to our visit at Assin Kushea, which had been arranged for us by Mrs. Juliana Imbeah-Ampiah, whose daughter Ronke is an alumna of the Bryn Mawr class of 2006. However, our jaws dropped as we saw that far more than a small entourage was awaiting our visit. We were welcomed by an assembly of well over a thousand people, young and old in what appeared to be the entire village of Assin Kushea. In a ceremony lasting two hours, the students began by being led around the square to shake hands with elders of the community sitting in the front rows. After being seated, they witnessed the entrance of the Chief, Nana Prah Agyensam II on a ceremonial stretcher carried by several warriors in traditional dress and surrounded by ministers, all wearing traditional Kente cloth robes with gold ornaments. After the Nana was seated on his royal “stool” the students were invited to approach and greet him one by one according to traditional protocols. (see DVD)

After enjoying performances by local choirs and traditional dancers, the Chamber Singers were asked to perform for the village. They processed into position to the strains of “Dinpa sen ahonya” (a song in the Asante language of Twi, which means “A good name is better than riches”). Their final selection was the song “Stan’ Still Jordan,” an arrangement I wrote for the tour combining an African-American spiritual with a traditional Ewe ceremonial song. The crowd began breaking out in applause and whistles and ringing cowbells when the vibrant African drumming began for the Ewe section of the piece. This piece is currently under consideration for publishing by two publishing houses, Alliance Music and EC Schirmer.

Those gathered were even more responsive when introduced to Haverford senior Joel Kwabi, a native of Ghana who plans to return after graduate work to help build the

economy in his homeland. At a dinner shortly after the ceremony, the Nana, now in a plain shirt and slacks, welcomed the students and explained that he knew Haverford well through his nephew, Richard Jonah, who graduated from Haverford in 1998. The Nana felt that the students in general and Joel in particular had made a very strong and positive impression on the children in attendance about the importance of education.

For most of the bi-college students the most profoundly affecting part of the tour was a late-night visit to the final bath-houses of the slaves on a river bank outside of Cape Coast, and then the next day to the slave castles of Elmina. Experienced guides and trusted Africana faculty members helped the students absorb in a more personal way than ever before a sense of the terrible personal price paid by 60 million African people over the 400 plus years of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Faculty members were deeply moved by how this representatively quite diverse group of students managed to offer each other both support and personal space through an intense experience that affected the all the students deeply, but in different ways. A spontaneous and comfortable silence on the bus after these trips gave way to a careful listening in group meetings after.

Friday

The next morning, we were invited to a live radio interview with the university station. Tiffany Shumate and Joe Kwabi spoke with the interviewer about their personal connections to both Ghana and the US in a wide-ranging interview that promoted the concert that night with three Cape Coast “youth” choirs. Similar to the choir in Kumasi, these choirs, which are the most active type of choirs in Ghana, are made up of young people from about ages 17-23. They are often affiliated with a church, though they usually perform outside of worship services. Their repertoire generally consists of European baroque and classical repertoire (especially choruses from *Messiah*), original Ghanaian compositions (often strongly influenced by that style), and complex arrangements by Ghanaian composers of traditional Ghanaian melodies. The later often have texts which function as proverbs of a semi-religious nature (such as “A good name is better than riches”). In music and popular culture generally the line between sacred and secular was quite indistinct. Ghanaian Christianity dominates the culture of the Southern half of Ghana, while Islam (a very “Ghanaian” form of Islam we were told) dominates the north (where we did not have time to visit on this trip).

Before our concert with the choirs at Cape Coast, we had a rehearsal on a fairly complex composition by the historically most important of Ghanaian composers, Ephraim Amu (1899-1995). [His reputation and the importance of choral music in Ghana are underlined by Mr. Amu’s presence on the most common bill in Ghana, the 20,000 *cedi* note. (In fact, one of the notable aspects of Ghanaian exchange (and economics) we became increasingly aware of through our visit was how there were few bills in circulation larger than the 20,000 cedi note (equal to about \$2.20 US), so carrying around the equivalent of \$100 US (as Americans are accustomed to doing with little thought) meant carrying a conspicuously large wad of cash.) We had been sent a hand-written version of this piece (called “Akwaaba Dwom” or “Welcome Song”), but when the choir leader began working with us in rehearsal, it became clear that the notated version was different in many details from the way the song was sung. (see DVD) Being visually

oriented Westerners when it comes to learning music, this through us for a loop at first, but the students adapted well.

At the beginning of the concert, it was requested that we sing the US national anthem. After discussing this with the students, we respectfully asked if we could substitute a verse of “America the Beautiful” instead because of the militaristic text of the “Star Spangled Banner” during a time of war which a significant number of the students were in opposition to. This change was respected and well received. In general however, US politics was not a topic of strong interest, with Ghana being generally pro-US and supportive of the Iraqi war effort.

The concert itself went very well – the church was a little hard to hear in because of the many ceiling fans going to keep the sanctuary relatively cool, but the large audience was very supportive. We ended again with the “Hallelujah Chorus.”

This night about 20 students stayed with families of local choir members in Cape Coast. Many reported having long conversations about familial and tribal customs in Ghana. Most students who made these visits felt it gave them an insight into the daily life of families in Ghana that they would not have obtained otherwise.

Saturday

The next day, we split into two busses – one that would take in the rain-forest skywalk tour, and others who would take a more leisurely trip back to Accra, stopping along the way several times to interact with peddlers along the road and to watch fishermen haul in their nets. The skywalk was similar to those I had encountered during an earlier Chamber Singers trip to Costa Rica, and were emblematic of Ghana’s attempts to encourage tourism through ecology, as was the case in Costa Rica.

During our last two days in Accra, Mr. Morgan took most of the students on visits to the artisans market where they could find locally crafted wood carvings, musical instruments, jewelry, cloth, and clothing. The market consisted of two dense groups of make-shift stalls in the middle of a vast vacant lot in the middle of the city. The vendors were very aggressive in their appeals to us, but most of the students, with help from Mr. Morgan, gradually became much more comfortable interacting with them and gaining some insight into the complexity of the relationship between local artisan and tourist in Ghanaian culture.

Our two science students also had an opportunity before we left to have a long visit with the biology department at the University of Legon where they will be working this summer with Prof. Iruka Okeke on a laboratory techniques clinic (see reflections from Prof. Okeke), bringing a load of requested textbooks along with them which the students had distributed among their luggage.

Our concert that night in Accra was the “gala” concert of our tour, honoring the 50th anniversary of Ghanaian independence, with the American Ambassador to Ghana Pamela Bridgewater and French Ambassador Pierre Jacquemot in attendance. Ambassador

Bridgewater made a very complementary speech to the audience (see DVD) and seemed genuinely surprised by the degree to which the American choir had sought to connect to the Ghanaian people by learning so much of their music. She also noticed the connection of the choir with the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who the State Department is sponsoring on a tour to Ghana this summer. The “Hallelujah Chorus” and dancing again closed out the evening performance, with everyone in high spirits.

Sunday

Sunday morning we had arranged (through Joel Kwabi) to sing at the Calvary Baptist Church in Accra, whose preacher, Rev. Fred Deegbe has served as the head of the National Council of Churches. The church was packed. However, instead of hearing a sermon from Rev. Deegbe, the preacher was a visiting missionary from the US who was visiting Africa for the first time after 20 years in China. It was a jarring experience to hear the cadences of an evangelical white preacher from America at the end of our journey to the heart of black Africa. The partisan tone of the sermon (and what most, though not all of the students felt was its sexist and unintentionally racist content) was jarring to most of the students, and led to some difficult discussions later that morning and for some time after. A couple of our African-American students actually sought out the preacher after the service to question some of his assumptions. The moment the choir actually sang turned out to be very positive in itself (see DVD) – singing into microphones because of the competing music coming from a another service behind the church, the choir got the congregation clapping and up on their feet as they returned to their pews to “Dinpa sen Ahonya.” Ambassador Bridgewater was again in attendance and addressed the congregation.

As disturbing as the sermon was to many of our students, it led to important discussions about the role of the Christian missionaries in African history, the role of Christianity in African culture, and the question of what it means for a non-sectarian choir such as ours, made up of students from quite diverse religious backgrounds, to sing in a worship service. A few weeks after our return, these issues came up again when the choir decided by consensus to decline an invitation to sing at the Bright Hope Baptist Church in Philadelphia because several of the students no longer felt comfortable singing in a Christian worship service. It was further decided that because of the complexity of these questions, future opportunities to sing during a worship service would need to be considered on a case to case basis.

Our trip concluded with a meal shared with 20 students of the Legon University at the home of Prof. of African History Takyimaa Manuh, who had given such a wonderful lecture at the beginning of the week. Relaxed individual conversations at tables were followed by an exchange of songs and questions between the two groups of students. Moved by the American’s positive and perceptive impressions of their home country, one Ghanaian student pleaded “I don’t know what plans you have, but don’t keep this experience to yourself! Say something positive about Africa to counter all the negative images people in the West see.” (see DVD) On the way back, to our hotel, one of our busses encountered the Ghanaian students waiting for an infrequent bus to take them back to the University. We asked our driver if we could give them a lift instead, and so happily our conversations were able to continue into the night. – *Thomas Lloyd*

Post-trip follow up – Spring Semester 2007:

Questions for reflection on the way back from Ghana (see representative excerpts elsewhere in this report):

1. Where there any of the perspectives or assumptions about Ghana you came with proven false during your actual experience in the country? On the other hand, were there perspectives or assumptions that were reinforced in unexpected ways?
2. Did the people we met in Ghana have pre-conceptions about us that were surprising to you? Do you think those perceptions changed as a result of our visit?
3. Do you feel any differently about your racial identity and heritage than you did before you came?
4. What impressed you about the role music plays in the lives of the people you met? Did this change the way you see music in your own life?
5. In what ways will this trip stimulate your interest in Africa in the future? What are the things you want to know more about in Africa?
6. What two or three most important things you hope to be able to share with people back on campus and at home about your experience in Ghana?

Public events and presentations during Spring 2007:

February 15: CPGC/HumCenter presentation: *El Maloume Bilal Said: Her Journey from Slavery to Parliament*; most Ghana tour participants attend and participate in discussion; Chamber Singers sing for guest at end of session

February 24: Haverford Alumnae of Color dinner: slide presentation on Ghana trip presented by John Duronville HC '07 and Joel Kwabi HC '07.

March 23: Ghana trip public presentation at Bryn Mawr (Aelwyd House) including slide presentation, student panel discussion, and singing.

April 13: Ghana trip public presentation at Haverford (MacCrate Hall) including first DVD showing, student panel discussion, and singing.

April 24: Open drumming workshop with Menes Yahudah, West African Drummer and certified Tam-Tam Mandingue instructor; held on founders steps; students with drums acquired in Ghana plus other students with and without drums.

Post-trip enrollment in Africana Studies courses:

- 1 student – POLS H235B01 – African Politics – Susannah Wing
 1 student – POLS H264B01 – Political Economies of Developing Countries –
 Susannah Wing
 10 students – RELG H132B01 – African American Religious Experience – Tracey Hucks
 2 students – RELG H347B01 – Souls of Black Folk: Dubois and the Problem
 of Religion - Terrence Johnson
 1 student – SOCL H235B01 - Class, Race, and Education – Mark Gould
 2 students – CITY/HIST B237 - Urbanization in Africa – Kalala Nglalamalume
- also: 1 student – ECON B225 – Economic Development – Michael Rock
 (final paper by Luke Van Meter on Ghana)

Bibliographic reference transfer:

The extended web pages created for Blackboard with access to all the primary and secondary readings along with other online and print resources was moved to the Tripod Subject Portal under Africana Studies for future use by students and faculty.

Samples of student reflections after the trip:

“Never in my life have I ever felt as intrigued and affected by my black heritage as I was at Elmina Castle. The whole experience made me question so much about myself, my family background, and how I see myself as an American. The compassion that we all as a group shared with each other during those couple of hours and afterwards was so powerful and appreciated. When we first arrived, one of the boys in the street said to me “Welcome home, brother!” to which I responded with a head nod, then went on my way. After experiencing the slave castle tour, the same words were uttered to me later in the tour, and instead of somewhat disregarding the man who said it. I shook his hand, looked him in the eye and said “It’s good to be home.” Granted I don’t feel like Africa is my only home – in fact only a small part of me is African. But what we experienced by actually being *in* Africa and seeing who and what we saw was essentially life-changing for me.” John Bower HC ’07 and member of the Chamber Singers

“I will never forget my young friend who seemed so full of spirit and life that I didn’t need to exchange words with her to see what kind of person she was. I simply had to watch her spinning on the dance floor, her smile glinting under the stage lights, and feel her hand in mine to feel connected to her. I also met her older sister and some of her friends, who were all around my age. I talked to them for awhile, and one of them kept asking me if I would forget her when I went home, of which she seemed incapable of being reassured. Finally, she took two bracelets off her arm, made of shining Ghana gold, and gave them to me. She seemed satisfied – I had two bangles and she had two, and I would bring a piece of her back home with me. A bit hesitantly at first, I reached for the new earrings my mom had given me for Christmas, unclipped them, and gave them to her. I will never forget this girl’s generosity with basically a perfect stranger.” Caitlin Dowdall BMC ’09 and member of Chamber Singers

“One thing that did bring all of us together to create a sense of community and responsibility around the importance of this trip to Africa was the music. When the Chamber Singers sang for different audiences, including school children, hospital attendees, entire communities, or the Chief, people were able to enjoy the beautiful quality and view their dedication to giving something to the people in the form of gratitude. I did not expect that the music song choices would effect our group’s overall experience in the way it did, such as when they sang “This Little Light of Mine” on the slave bath house site in the woods in front of a river where many slaves died in an attempt to get freedom. Our music enhanced our understanding of the struggle, the hope, and the complexity of the black experience in the world because of the far-reaching affects of the trans-Atlantic slave trade.” Lorin Jackson HC ’08, Mellon-Mays Fellow

“I have come to a better understanding of the state of the African race in the diaspora. The issue with race is so much more complicated than I’ve thought it to be. There’s so much reading I need to do and I am on a personal mission to keep in dialogue with the

people on this trip about this issue....I've come to realize that being a Ghanaian myself that I don't know enough of my country because I haven't seen that much of it. So I want to do more traveling and exploring." Joel Kwabi HC '07, from Tema, Ghana, and member of Chamber Singers

One other thing that I would like to share about this trip, was that singing African American spirituals was very significant. It was crucial to the purpose of our trip to share with them this kind of music that represents the African heritage in American culture. Personally, I was very moved by the selection of songs. Prior to this trip, I did not have much knowledge about African American spirituals, so having heard these songs throughout our trip has indeed changed the way in which I see music in my own life and it has made me want to learn more about this genre of music.

In general, I feel that I see music differently because music is not exclusively a source of amusement, but it is a guide to a people's culture. We have adopted so much of African music (at least that is the case in Latin music and Brazilian music) but we do not take the time to find out where exactly these rhythms come, or what exactly they mean. That is probably the most valuable lesson I learned during our trip, every symbol, every sound, every word has significance to the culture which cannot be neglected. *Dinpa...* is not just song with a good beat to dance to, but it is a song with real message to the people of Ghana, and a song that reflects the mentality of these people, "*A good name is better than riches.*" - Gemma Lopez HC '08, Mellon-Mays Fellow

"We had the opportunity one night to have dinner at a professor's house and meet with some college students. While talking with them, they were very much surprised when they learned that the majority of Americans can only speak one language and that our school system did not talk about the history of many African countries. They proclaimed it to be unfair that they knew more about their own history *and* our history than we did." Kate Tomascovic BMC '09 and member of the Chamber Singers

"Being at what can be considered the birthplace of the hate and racism that continues in America today was powerful and intense in a way I could have never expected....I couldn't comprehend with my mind how anyone could enslave another human being, much less this group of beautiful, cultured, amazing people....I began to understand what the color of my skin can represent and how deeply painful it is for all of us that something we are so not in control of can affect our life experience so much....As much as I felt trapped, estranged, and guilty, I broke through to a point in myself where I understood in a profound way, the humanity of *everyone*, no matter the color of their skin. I understood, somehow, that when one human being suffers, we all suffer...it is our own denial and detachment that keeps us from this compassion and understanding." Caitlin Dowdall BMC '09 and member of Chamber Singers

The students and Professors of African descent reacted strongly to the vivid proof of what their ancestors had gone through, especially while visiting the bathhouse and slave castles near Kumasi and Cape Coast. All this made me reflect on my own racial identity and heritage, after all the indigenous populations of our Latin American countries were also enslaved by the Europeans, of course never to the extent that Africans were. Also, Latin America has a huge Afro-Latino population, as a result of the slave trade that it was involved in years after its discovery. Even in my country, the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua is mainly Afro-Nicaraguan with a different culture and a different language (English), an area that I am eager to learn more about.

And so, it is not only in the United States that African Americans are proof of these awful times of slavery and forced migration, but this exists in the part of the world that I know best and that I am part of. I feel differently about living in the United States and about being a minority in a mainly white institution as well. Having a better understanding of the history of this other minority group (the African Americans) has made me reflect on my view of the Latino experience in the United States. - Gemma Lopez HC '08, Mellon-Mays Fellow

Overall I must say the experience exceeded my expectations in many different ways. I was originally afraid that traveling with such a large group would mean more stress, people entering the situation with different traveling experiences and interest would increase the likelihood of conflict within the group. But in many ways our group was able to overcome those challenges by a level of openness in our discussions and opinions, I thought it was great that there were frequent moments where we could “check in” on how the group was feeling about what we were experiencing. I expected more people to fall sick or be uncomfortable with the environment and food but again we handled that pretty well.

The fact that it was a singing tour made the experience even more amazing. Music is able to transcend all sorts of social, political and cultural barriers and bring a variety of peoples in harmonious communion with one another. It provided the opportunity for real exchange and collaboration each time the group shared a song(s) with another and had the same gesture reciprocated. Even as a non-singing member I wish I could travel this way more often. Though we were separated on different busses and people naturally formed their small groups I think there was a sincere bond that developed over the period of a few days among all the members through the shared experiences. Our memories will forever be linked through powerful moments like hearing “This little light of mine” sung in the Chiefs dining room, in the professor’s classroom or by the “last baths”; and moments like waiting for the chief among hundreds of welcoming faces or the emotional tour through Elmina Castle.

Ghana itself, the people and culture could not have been more welcoming, generous, warm and educational; giving us a genuine sense of hospitality each step of our

trip and teaching us about the rich history of West Africa and enlightening us on the realities of the present. In addition helping us to understand the roles we can play as members of a global community.

– John Duronville HC '07, Africana Studies (who was also on the January 2006 tri-college trip to Ghana by 20 Mellon-Mays fellows and Africana studies students).

Question and response to a concern about approaching groups of strangers along the way in Ghana:

I felt a bit ambivalent about some of the ways we approached the local population with our singing. For example, I was uncomfortable with some of the unscheduled events when we would randomly stop alongside the road and offer a song to a group of people or the school children. During the trip some of us commented on how strange and imposing, though with good intention, such gestures can be. Imagine a group of foreigners driving through Haverford and suddenly deciding to enter a school in session, disrupting the events of the day and round up everyone expecting that what will be presented (songs) will be appreciated and welcomed by everyone.

– John Duronville HC '07

Response by Tom Lloyd (emailed to all tour participants):

This is certainly a valid observation - there is clearly a risk that these kinds of spontaneous musical happenings by a big American group like ours can be perceived as barreling in to snatch a sort of "cultural experience trophy" to bring back home with nice photos and videos to show to all with little regard for the impact on the local people encountered. In an attempt to prevent this from happening, there is a clear sequence of preparation that happens on first encountering a group of people we think we'd like to meet and possibly sing for. And then there is a definite follow-up that needs to take place after, with which we could use your help.

I realize I should have shared this with you at some point, because most of this preparation happened while you all were waiting on the buses, since it's usually better to first approach people with just one or two leaders and a local contact person before asking everyone to get off the bus and "descend" on the place we're visiting. It was a little different in each case.

At La Yahoushua school, we thought we had had an appointment to spend a few hours at the school building new bookshelves for their library so that it would be ready for the "Book Bombing Africa" campaign being organized in the states. We also had supplies to bring that had been requested before we came through our contact with the school.

For various reasons, we found out when we got there that that plan had fallen through, and there was no carpenter and no material to build with. We still had the supplies, but wondered if there was a way we could interact with the students, so we asked the teachers

in charge. They indicated they would love to have us sing for the children, one school at a time, and that the children would love to sing for us to (which is what we do whenever possible, because it makes the exchange a little more mutual). In doing these kind of negotiations, I always rely on our local contact, not only for interpretation of the language, but to really make sure that singing for them would not be perceived as an imposition or condescending, because sometimes people can be polite on the surface but be wishing you'd go away underneath. At that point was when we gave the signal for everyone to get off the bus (of course the buses themselves were already a distraction, but we thought we had an appointment). The "presentation" ceremony was a little bit of a surprise - the teachers insisted on it, and the students obviously took great pride in being able to accept our gifts in a more formal way.

The group of people we encountered at the cocoa plantation across the street from our rest-stop on the way to Kumasi obviously came about with no advance planning. Mr. Charles had suggested to a couple of us who were waiting around that he would take us across the street and show us the cocoa beans laying out in the sun. Then he took us around back where we saw the wood carvers and the cocoa palms - Mr. Charles introduced us to the man in charge who cut open the fruit for us to see and taste it in its raw form. When I saw the families gathered around, I asked Mr. Charles if they would welcome us singing a song to them. He thought they might, but first talked to a few of the elders. He found that some spoke Ewe and some spoke Twi and that they would welcome us singing for them. After asking a few times "are you sure?" we went up and called everyone down.

The school we encountered when we were waiting for Mr. Kyei-manu before going on to the Chiefs reception was a different situation again. Mr. Morgan and Mr. Charles had decided to pull up on that side road across from the schools because he thought we would be easily seen by Mr. Kyei-manu (though that proved not to be the case, which is why we were there for almost 2 hours!) but out of the way of the traffic on the main road.

Two big busses stopped on the corner are probably not that common there, and after about 10 minutes, we noticed that there were groups of children on the school porch wondering who we were and what we were doing. So I asked Mr. Morgan if we should enquire if they would like to meet us. The two of us approached and spoke with the teachers. If they had said "thank you so much, but we really need to keep their attention on school work, would you mind driving up the road a ways so that you're not such a distraction" we would of course have done so. But when the teachers found out we had a choir on board, they seemed genuinely eager to have us come visit the children.

After seeking several reassurances that this is what they really wanted us to do, we had the choir get off the bus again. After singing for a couple of the smaller classes, the teachers from the older classes asked us to come to the upper school and allow them to gather everyone together in an assembly to sing for us. For those of you who weren't there, the teachers were quite bursting with pride to show off their students and their school, and sang several school songs for us. There was then a prolonged saying good-by as their school day was close to ending and the students played with everyone out in front of the school.

Along the way, I did stop and think to myself several times, isn't this crazy? could the same thing even be imaginable on my suburban block in Havertown or at my kids' elementary school around the corner, and if not, isn't there something presumptuous about our behavior here? On the one hand, I thought "if it was a rare occurrence, it would be really wonderful to have a school choir from Ghana drop into a Chamber Singers rehearsal or music or religion class - what a breath of fresh air that would bring" - but of course things like that never happen unplanned and highly organized here (I just yesterday received an email from a Russian children's choir looking for a place to sing in May, and have put them in touch with several children's choirs in the Philadelphia area). And they're rare to begin with because it is prohibitively expensive for most groups from abroad to visit us.

But also, it is the nature of wealth, I think, that the more we have of it, the more we tend to wall ourselves off from the world and protect ourselves in many ways from spontaneous happenings of various kinds. That's what draws many young people to cities in the US, where random encounters with other human beings are still likely to happen. My guess is that for the children and families we sang for, hearing a Western choir stop by to sing songs in their own language and in English is probably a rare enough occurrence to be welcome.

However, they will be most likely to remember us as sincerely interested in them rather than cultural carpetbaggers if we follow through with help they asked for that we said we could supply after we got home - namely, books for both schools and possibly help getting the computer lab set up at the Assin Fosu school - this is where they will know how much of an impression they made on us. – Tom Lloyd

Tour reflections of Tiffany Shumate, BMC '08 (Africana Studies)

I was raised knowing that I was part Ghanaian. Although I had no idea what that meant, my Aunt always reminded me that my father was from a country far away in Africa. From an early age, I began looking on the globe for Ghana. I had no idea where it was in Africa, so I just picked any color-coded country and made it my own. I remember showing my friends my globe: "...and this is where my dad is from. He's Ghanaian." When my dad would visit, I would question him about his childhood; "Did you see lions? What kinds of food did you eat? Did you ever meet a king? He would entertain my questions with stories about living in a village near the ocean. He told about learning to swim in the Atlantic, and how he and his dad would go fishing every Saturday morning. Once, when I was eleven years old, he told me that he was a prince and that I would one day be the Queen of Ghana. I remember sitting on his lap and listening to these stories until his words faded away and I was fast asleep.

Needless to say, my excitement about my father's stories lessened as I got older. Along with that excitement, our relationship also began to fade. I discovered that my dad had 8 children living in Ghana. It upset me that I had brothers and sisters who I had

never seen. I was angry with my father because I felt that he had kept me away from my family. “They’re *my* sisters and *my* brothers” I remember yelling one day. “No, they are *my* children,” he replied. It became too difficult to know that I had siblings living an ocean away. By the time I was 17, Ghana was just a country in Africa, nothing more – nothing less.

My interest in Ghana did not return until my second year at Bryn Mawr. I found out there was an opportunity to travel to Ghana, and so I decided to attend the information session. My first trip to Ghana will always stay with me. We arrived in the Accra Airport on a sticky, hot night. When we walked out of the airport, there seemed to be hundreds of people waiting to welcome us! I looked around and saw all of these beautiful, black faces. I finally felt at home. Then I heard this small voice screaming my name, “Tiffany, Tiffany! Look, I’m over here.” I turned around and this young woman started to run towards me with her arms spread wide to greet me with a big hug. At first, I had no idea who the young woman was; I had never seen her before so I just guessed that maybe I reminded her of someone, ironically, named Tiffany. Then she began to hug me and cry. Before I could ask her name or how she knew me, I also began to cry. When I looked in her face, under all of the tears, I saw my father’s eyes and his smile. This woman was my sister Comfort! We embraced for what seemed like hours. In just those few moments, I felt like I had known my sister my entire life. I introduced her to the rest of the Tri-Co group, and then we drove to our hotel.

This past January, I traveled to Ghana for the second time, this time with a large group of 40 students within the Bi-Co. This trip was powerful for me on multiple levels because I began to reevaluate the importance of family. When I say family here, I do not mean it in the nuclear sense of how we think of family, but in the broader sense of the word.

Our group was made up of Chamber Singers, staff, and faculty members within the Bi-Co. At first, I was a bit nervous about traveling with the group, honestly because it was a predominately White group. I was afraid that I might overhear some of the group members complaining about the heat or laughing at things/people that were unknown to them; I was unsure about the impact their racial presence would have in an African country; and ultimately, I was unsure if I wanted to share a part of myself with such a large group of people who I felt could not relate to anything African. Before this group, Ghana was mine. MY family lived in Ghana. MY Dad is Ghanaian. MY roots are Ghanaian. So why are these non-Ghanaians in MY country?

I asked these questions for several days. It changed the night we visited the Last Bath. The Last Bath is the river outside of Cape Coast where the slaves were taken to bathe before they were torn away from their motherland. We visited the Last Bath on our first Tri-Co trip to Ghana, but this experience was different. As a group of 40 Bi-Co students, staff, and faculty, we walked the same narrow dirt path the slaves walked just decades ago. It was pitch black and all we could hear were crickets singing to the beat of our unsteady footsteps. We walked in silence. We walked in silence together. Some people holding hands, other people holding flashlights. When we finally reached the

river, we stopped and we waited. Our tour guide began to explain how the slaves, in their shackles, were dragged down to the river and forced to bathe in the cold water. He spoke about how some of the slaves were brutally murdered if they tried to run. Others were tied to tree stumps to wait their turn to bathe. He showed us the stumps where the slaves were tied and the group looked in silence.

Then, a professor requested that the group sing the song “This Little Light of Mine.” She thought it would be a beautiful gift in remembrance of our ancestors. Natalee, one of the soloist, began to sing and that’s when I physically felt something change in my body. Although I had visited the Last Bath on my first trip to Ghana, I did not feel a connection. But once Natalee and the rest of the Chamber Singers began to sing, I felt something like a release overcome me. I began to weep, not only because of the atrocities that had happened on the very earth I was standing on, but also because I was sharing this experience with a group of Bi-Co students. I had not known many of the students for more than 4 or 5 days, and here we were, standing on the river bank where my ancestors had been bathed before they had traveled the Middle Passage and were brought to the Americas. The beautiful voices of the chamber singers filled the forest.

In my heart, All over the World, Let it Shine

When the song was over, we stood in silence. Together. I held hands with some student who I did not know and for that moment, she was my sister. I think back to that night, and I do not think that there were any dry eyes standing on that river bank. Standing with that group of 40 students was such a powerful experience for me because I felt like I was standing with my family for the first time. There was a presence that we experienced that night that cannot, for me, be properly placed into words. The best part about it is that we all felt it together.

Post-tour reflections by faculty and staff

Prof. Tracey Hucks (HC Religion and Africana Studies)

The Ghana trip was instrumental in forming important connections between academic and experiential learning. Throughout the trip, the group explored various cultural and historical issues such as race, class, transatlantic slavery, and religion. As participating faculty members, our goal was to ensure that students were provided with faculty-facilitated orientations and debriefings before and after each major cultural and/or historical site. These discussions helped to bridge pertinent scholarly information on the various sites with actual student experiences of these sites.

Although the primary purpose of the trip was to perform a collection of shared concerts, the trip to Ghana was also an important exploration in history and material culture. Within the rich group discussions, students raised many insightful questions, explored new interests, and even disclosed important inner wrestlings with their own identity. After returning to Haverford, some students such as Thomas Bryan, Halley Cody, Charles Collett, Rima Bishar, Caitlin Dowdall, Robert Harbison, Joel Kwabi, Kara Rosania, Hannah Upp, John Duronville, and Sonia Williams wanted to continue the conversations which had begun in Ghana within a more formalized academic environment. As a result, they enrolled in Religion 132 "The Varieties of the African American Religious Experience" which examined the religious identity of African Americans extending from the transatlantic slave trade to the present.

A significant portion of the course was spent on the history of slavery and the involuntary transmission of West and Central Africans to the New World. Students who participated in the Ghana trip often remarked that the reading material had a tremendous impact upon them because of their firsthand knowledge of slave dungeons in Ghana. For them, it was as though the academic was somehow coming alive as a result of the experiential. Within the course, there were also moments when the students were able to illuminate important features of African American religiosity.

For example, in the section on the development of African American spirituals during slavery, the Chamber Singers enrolled in the course were willing to provide a musical example of an African American spiritual. Their classmates responded with much enthusiasm and appreciation for helping them to greater understand the subject matter. Throughout the semester, "Ghana" emerged as an important analytical and interpretive paradigm from which students were able to engage the course materials. It was a reference which was constantly invoked and on the final day of the course a student remarked that they were indeed indebted to the Ghana trip for sparking their initial intellectual curiosity in the integrated issues of history, race, and religion.

Faculty/Staff reflections: Prof. Iruka Okeke, Haverford (Biology)

Two of my students, Becki Lijek '07 and Rima Bishar BMC '08, accompanied the chamber singers on their winter tour to Ghana. Becki and Rima will be studying antimicrobial resistance in Ghana, working at my collaborator Mercy Newman's lab in Accra. They will also serve as teaching assistants at a workshop we plan to mount there.

I will accompany Becki and Rima on the research trip but can only spend two weeks with them, during which I plan to orient them with working in a differently equipped lab as well as mount the workshop. Becki's Beckman and Rima's HHMI fellowships also have very rigorous scientific expectations, which means that much of the additional two weeks they have must be spent in the lab in Accra. Whilst it is inevitable that they will learn so much from working in this very different laboratory environment, it helps tremendously that the students got the opportunity to tour and get to know the country ahead of time. It also helped for them to travel in a group with appropriate guides so that they could get to know places outside Accra and travel safely.

Rima and Becki also met with Professor Newman, the graduate student with whom they will work from day to day and other members of staff in the microbiology department ahead of their visit. Finally, their visit assisted all of us in preparing materials to ship to Ghana ahead of the workshop and to assess needs for the workshop. The students were able to preview their accommodation and working conditions, which will allow them to realistically prepare for the month-long stay in June, given that we must devote much of our luggage to research materials. Finally, planning towards the trip made it possible for the students to get their visas and travel medicines sorted out ahead of time, which has greatly assisted me in the logistics of planning the June trip.

My collaborators in Nigeria and Ghana are constantly asking me for advanced biology textbooks. I collect recent editions and duplicate copies from my colleagues but have typically only been able to send five or less each year because the cost of shipping these books exceeds their monetary value. This year, the chamber singers and other tour members, carrying a book or two each, allowed us to ship two-dozen books to the University of Ghana. Graduate students and Professors there were extremely grateful to receive them.

Faculty/Staff reflections: Dean Sunni Green Tolbert, HC OMISA

January in Ghana was the epitome of the forward-backward stance of bold beginnings and entrenched traditions.

During Winter Break, 2006, the OMA collaborated with the BCC at Swarthmore and the Intercultural Affairs Office at BMC on a trip to Ghana. Students who participated returned with amazing observations and stories about how deeply moved they were. Their responses reinforced the decision to explore the possibility of making this an annual event. When an invitation to travel to Ghana presented itself in the spring semester, the OMA agreed with enthusiasm to be a part of the trip which was scheduled to take place the following January, 2007. Working collaboratively with the HC-BMC Chamber Singers, the bi-college Africana Studies Program and the Biology Department, the OMA provided financial resources, staffing, technical and administrative support. Three MMUF students were part of the group.

Characterized by diversity, this intergenerational, interracial, multicultural group of student musicians, social and natural science majors, deans and faculty shared a searing, exhilarating, often serendipitous experience which forced us to examine new perspectives, new interpretations and new realities.

For several years the Office of Multicultural Affairs has designed experiences for its MMUF fellows to culturally distinct locations, where they are introduced to and challenged by unfamiliar customs. What makes the MMUF trips different from most college travel is what we experienced in Ghana. The group de-briefs and discusses its experiences with peers, faculty and local scholars, artists and activists. In formal and informal ways, the trip offered students (and adults) a deeper engagement with the people and culture of our host country, while it also demanded greater connection and intimacy as we tried (African, Asian, White and Hispanic) to navigate the chasm of the U.S.'s racial legacy, and angst, its stereotypes about Africa and people of African descent.

As it reached out to embrace its 50th year of Independence from Great Britain, Ghana greeted us with pomp and pride wherever the choir performed. In authority and majesty, the ceremonies illustrated and honored the social complexity, beauty, and travails of an ancient yet futuristic society. As we traveled from Accra to Kumasi to Cape Coast and back to Accra, there were images of grit and determination, assertiveness and pride in the carriage of busy, focused, resourceful Ghanaians. There is an energy, a momentum, an obvious eagerness to stride toward global citizenship.

For many in the HC-BMC group, the trip to Cape Coast was an immersion into the profoundly, wrenching, painful history of slavery and colonialization. Standing in the slave dungeons with others from the African diaspora, absorbing ancestral pain, and acknowledging the resilient impact of slavery and oppression still weighing on Africa and African peoples was a depressing, enervating experience. Expressions of shock and disbelief accompanied by glimmers of understanding spread across the faces of white students in our group, too, as they tried to digest the indigestible. The many ways the

group tried to hold each other, rejoice in our humanity and acknowledge the unfinished business of working for social justice, will direct students' lives and commitments in the years to come.

The insights gained and lessons learned from the trip to Ghana were more profound, more lasting because we were a group, confined to the intimacy of traveling and living together. The potential for deep learning was intensified by the presence and expertise of experienced faculty/dean who offered information, and opportunities to help students unpack their intellectual and psychological reactions to what they were experiencing.

The January 2007 trip to Ghana altered the perspective of almost everyone who was a part of the group. There was a confluence of factors, which came together to offer a rare set of ingredients which might be difficult to replicate. Nevertheless, it is important for the College to try. As it continues its commitment to offer trips to Ghana each year, the OMA will make every effort to develop a successful prescription for travel to an exciting, blossoming land. Trips such as this one are a programmatic realization of the College's goal of celebrating cultural diversity, and building a multicultural community.

Faculty/Staff reflections: Samantha Ivery, Program Director, HC OMISA

To say that I was excited to travel to Ghana, West Africa would be an understatement. To say that the twelve day journey with thirty-six students and five other faculty and staff, to three cities and two villages didn't change my life would be lying. The Bi-Co trip to Ghana was amazing. The trip was more than well organized and included reasonable expectations of the participants as well as plenty of room for flexibility. I believe the experience shared by the students in and outside of the chamber singers group was one that had a significant impact on their college experience.

I believe the students' cultural immersion was holistic in that it was intellectual, spiritual, physical, and emotional. The students participated in lectures and discussions prior to leaving to prepare them to participate in a different culture. They were also instructed about the context in which they would be seen based upon both Ghana's and the United States colonial history. Additionally, students were encouraged to discuss with each other prior, during, and after the trip in order to enhance their understanding of what they experienced. The trip for many was also spiritual in that in Ghanaian culture as well as others, life does not end at death. One of the moments with a strong impact on our trip illustrated how the students came into personal exploration and discovery of their own humanity and spirituality. This happened at our visit to the last bath house; a place where enslaved Africans were taken to bathe for the last time before being locked in slave dungeons prior to their journey to the "New World."

Additionally, our schedule was full of sight seeing and exploration of Ghana which included long bus rides, visits to markets, museums, and a national rain forest. While the trip was not physically challenging, it definitely required individual levels of endurance depending on the day and activity at hand. The trip was filled with many emotions from the moment we left campus until we returned. In fact, each time the group comes together in totality we find ourselves back in Ghana...back at the Professor's house, back in the village with the Chief, back on the bus playing endless card games to pass the time. The students, staff, and faculty from this trip have a connection; a connection that sustains, a connection that makes it possible for some to reconnect to painful pasts, to uncertain futures, and to new ways of life.

I am a firm believer in dialogue across difference. This trip to Ghana is an example of exactly how dialogue can open up paths for understanding, growth, and change. Race relations in the United States have been an issue since the first explorers landed and saw difference with the native people in the Americas. It will continue to be an issue as long as people fear dialogue. The students on this trip embraced the idea that they would learn something in Ghana. They embraced the idea that they had something to share. They embraced each others differences and allowed themselves the room to be authentic in exploring their own existence in the world.

As I stated earlier, this trip created connections in a holistic way. The students who came to share music and what that means to them were able to find similarities first, were able to connect with music instead of fearing the language barrier, the cultural differences, the

preconceived notions that came from some historian they never met. The students who came as a part of their studies in Biology were able to see how their privilege in access to education can benefit others. They saw first hand the inequities in how the world shares resources and are now empowered to make changes in their field of study. They are social justice change agents in the field of science and they see how it all works together.

The students who are Africana Studies concentrators were also profoundly changed in that they were able to connect years of antidotes, history lessons, and cultural references to the source. It is one thing to study the affects of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade on African descendants in the Americas and it is another thing to be shut up in the dungeons where the enslaved Africans fought and died for their freedom and the freedom of their families. For many students, this trip sparked a light that will illuminate the remainder of their experience at Haverford and Bryn Mawr.

Two songs became central to our journey, This Little Light of Mine and Dinpa Sen Ahonya. Both songs illustrate the essence of this trip. Dinpa Sen Ahonya means a good name is better than riches and This Little Light of Mine illustrates a desire to share with the world your uniqueness despite what you are surrounded with, to share your passions so that you have a positive impact on the world. We all left Philadelphia full of positive energy to explore, experience, and engage in dialogue with a new culture and its people. We returned forever changed and forever connected to the culture, the people, and a responsibility to be ambassadors of social equality and inclusion. We are connected to the families and colleagues we met in Ghana and I truly believe that we each feel a personal responsibility to someone we met to live our lives remembering that what we do and say, and what we don't do and say has an impact farther than we could imagine.

Dr. Cornel West once said, "A fully functional multiracial society cannot be achieved without a sense of history and open, honest dialogue." I believe the students on this trip have a much better sense of their history and the connected histories of Ghana and the United States and are much better equipped to engage in dialogue across difference and grapple with the ideas and constructs that define this unequal, inequitable society in which we live.

2007 Haverford/Bryn Mawr Ghana Tour Roster

Bi-college Africana Studies program (3):

John Duronville HC '07
 Sheena Reed BMC '08
 Tiffany Shumate BMC '08

HC – Mellon-Mays Fellows (3):

Lorin Jackson HC '08
 Jemma Lopez HC '08
 Sonia Williams HC '08

HC – Biology (students of Prof. Iruka Okeke - 2):

Rima Bishar BMC '08
 Rebeccah Lijek HC '07

Chamber Singers (27):

John Bower HC '07	Jason Oaks HC '09
Tharrison Boykin HC '09	Melani Olivares BMC '10
Tommy Bryan HC '08	Kara Rosania BMC '08
Kate Chiappinelli HC '07	Elizabeth Shaw BMC '07
Alex Choi HC '07	Natalee Smith BMC '08
Halley Cody BMC '10	Kate Tomaskovic BMC '09
Charles Collett HC '07	Hannah Upp BMC '07
Caitlin Dowdall BMC '09	Leigh Urbschat HC '08
Alyssa Fischer BMC '10	Luke Van Meter HC '09
Rob Harbison HC '09	John Washington HC '10
Joel Kwabi HC '07	Conor Weiss HC '10
Siggy Moore HC '09	Jeff Wildermuth HC '10
Cecily Moyer HC '09	Jessica Wu HC '09
Zach Newman HC '07	

Faculty/staff (5):

Thomas Lloyd – HC music
 Tracey Hucks – HC religion and Africana Studies
 Kalala Ngalamulune – BMC history and Africana Studies
 Sunni Green Tolbert – HC Dean, Office of Multicultural and International Student

Affairs

Samantha Ivery – HC Program Director of OMISA
 (Bonnie Dill, Chair of Women's Studies, U. of Maryland (guest))

Students in Chamber Singers who ended up not going on trip as planned (4):

- last minute illness (2)
 - parental approval ultimately withheld (2)

APPENDIX:

A Kwanzaa Holiday Celebration
The Chamber Singers of Haverford and Bryn Mawr Colleges
Thomas Lloyd, Director
Thursday, December 14, 2006 at 8:00 p.m.
Founders Great Hall – Haverford College

Processional: Egbe Enye (This is the day) – Robert G. K. Ndo

Introduction to Kwanzaa - Tiffany Shumate HC '06

The Seven Principles (Nguzo Saba)

Umoja (Unity) – Candace LaCrosse HC '10

Come Sunday - Duke Ellington (arr. Herman McCoy)
Sing-along carol: Rise up, shepherd, and follow

Kujichagulia (Self-Determination) – John Bower HC '06

I hear a voice a prayin' – arr. Houston Bright
 Deep River – arr. Larry Farrow (Natalee Smith BMC '08, soprano)
Sing-along carol: Go tell it on the mountain

Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) – John Washington HC '10

The battle of Jericho – arr. Moses Hogan
 There is a balm in Gilead – arr. William Dawson (Charles Collett HC '06, tenor)

Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics) – May Lample HC '10

Dinpa Sen Ahonya (A good name is better than riches) – Henry Gyasi
 Dumedefo (The foot that travels) – Walter K. Blege

Nia (Purpose) – John Duronville HC '06

I'm gonna sing 'til the spirit moves in my heart – arr. Moses Hogan
Sing along carol: Mary had a baby
 This little light of mine – arr. Moses Hogan
 (Sarah Deibler BMC '08, mezzo, John Bower HC '06, tenor)

Kuumba (Creativity) – Tharrison Boykin HC '09

Kasar mie la gahi (The earth is tired) - Alberto Grau

Imani (Faith) – Natalee Smith BMC '08

Nhyira (Blessed are those who trust in the Lord) – Rev. Newlove Annan
 Stan' Still, Jordan / Egbe Nukpowo – arr. Thomas Lloyd

Recessional: Egbe Enye (This is the day) – Robert G. K. Ndo

Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is an African American cultural holiday, which intertwines African traditions with American customs, that is celebrated from December 26th to January 1st. It was first celebrated on December 26, 1966 in Los Angeles by Dr. Maulena Karenga. This year will mark the 40th anniversary of the Kwanzaa Celebration.

Based on six criteria – history, mythology, creativity, social structure, political organization, and economics, Dr. Karenga developed Kwanzaa into an African American holiday. The core principles of Kwanzaa, the Nguzo Saba (the seven principles), which he expresses in Swahili, a language of East Africa, are:

Umoja (oo-MOH-jah) – Unity

Kujichagulia (koo-GEE-cha-GOO-lee-ah) – Self-Determination

Ujima (oo-Gee-mah) – Collective Work and Responsibility

Ujamaa (oo-JAH-mah) – Cooperative Economics

Nia (NEE-ah) – Purpose

Kuumba (koo-OOM-bah) – Creativity and

Imani (ee-MAH-nee) – Faith

Additionally, there are seven symbols associated with Kwanzaa, also expressed in Swahili are: **Mazao (mah-ZAH-oo)** – Fruits, Vegetables, and Nuts, which symbolize work and the basis of the holiday. It represents the historical foundation for Kwanzaa, the gathering of the people that is patterned after African harvest festivals.

Mkeke (mm-Kay-kah) – The Place Mat, made from straw or cloth, comes directly from Africa and expresses history, culture, and tradition. Ancient societies made mats from straw, the dried seams of grains, sowed and reaped collectively.

Vibunzi (vee-BOON-zee) – The Ear of Corn, the stalk of corn represents fertility and symbolizes that through the birth and growth of children, the future hopes of the family are brought to life. Children are essential to Kwanzaa, for they are the future. They will carry cultural values and practices into the next generation.

Mishumbaa Saba (mee-SHOO-mah, SAH-bah) – The Seven Candles are ceremonial objects with two primary purposes: to re-create symbolically the sun's power and to provide light.

Kinara (kee-NAH-rah) – Candleholder, the kinara is the center of the Kwanzaa setting and represents the original stalk from which we came: our ancestry.

Kikombe cha Umoja (Kee-KOOM-bay) – The Communal Cup of Unity is a special cup that is used to perform the libation ritual during the Karamu (kah-RAH-moo) feast on the sixth day of Kwanzaa. During the feast the kikombe cha umoja is passed around for each participant to drink from. Then the eldest person present, pours the libation to honor the ancestors.

Zawadi (zah-WAH-dee) – Gifts. During the seventh day of celebration we give meaningful zawadi to encourage growth, self-determination, achievement, and success.

In a traditional Kwanzaa celebration there is a daily ceremony that includes these symbols as they relate to the principle being celebrated. Tonight we will only light the candles and share a reading of explanation and inspiration for each of the seven principles.

APPENDIX:

*Stan' Still Jordan /
Egbe nukp, w. (Today's riches)*

arranged by Thomas Lloyd

The African-American Spiritual *Stan' Still Jordan* is freely based on the version of the traditional melody found in James Weldon Johnson and J. Rosamond Johnson, *The Books of American Negro Spirituals* (1925; Da Capo Press) pp. 82-84.

Egbe nu kpòwò is freely adapted from a traditional Gbòlò dance song heard in a field recording of the Ziaví Zígí in the Northern Ewe region of Ghana and transcribed by Kofi Agawu in his book *African Rhythm – A Northern Ewe Perspective* (1995; Cambridge UP) pp 114-142. Kofi Agawu translates the Ewe text as:

*Today's riches have made you forget yesterday;
Send cloth to your mother in the grave.*

Agawu describes the larger dance from which this verse comes as follows: “Thought to have originated in N,tsie, the last major pre-colonial Ewe settlement, Zígí is a dance for young people on the verge of marriage and for already-married men and women.” (p. 114) As such it is a rich repository for wisdom and stories reflecting the values and traditions of the community.

About the final verse of the song adapted for this composition Agawu states that it “tells a woman who has suddenly come into wealth not to forget her dead mother. While your mother was alive, she worked hard to look after you. If you have now made money and own many cloths, the least you can do, instead of forgetting about times past, is to remove one of the cloths and send it to your mother in the grave. Short memories are here discouraged, especially when what seems to be forgotten is the very ecology that sustained one’s upbringing and paved the way for future success.” (p. 140)