

Kwadehyewa: Inviting Cross-cultural Dialogue

Abstract. This paper scrutinises the subtleties of my musical composition *Kwadehyewa* (2019), a re-envisioned adaptation of the 1st movement of *Asamasaw* (2015). Utilising a practice-based research method influenced by interculturalism, this paper performs a comprehensive analysis of the piece. In an era where contemporary music increasingly embraces cross-cultural dialogue, *Kwadehyewa* is a prism to examine the convergence of disparate influences in artistic expression. By delving into *Kwadehyewa*, this article seeks to glean insights into the broader exploration of cultural amalgamation and artistic innovation, contributing to the ongoing discourse surrounding intercultural artistic endeavours.

Keywords: *Kwadehyewa*, *Asamasaw*, interculturalism, African music, practice-based research, transformation.

Introduction: *Kwadehyewa* in the Context of Contemporary Music Studies and Interculturalism

The significance of my musical piece *Kwadehyewa* (2019) within contemporary music studies extends beyond its mere melodic notes. Instead, it serves as a rich tapestry interwoven with diverse cultural elements, exemplifying the prevailing current of interculturality in today's musical landscape. In an age characterised by an increasing embrace of cross-cultural dialogue within contemporary music, *Kwadehyewa* stands as a poignant prism to examine the convergence of disparate cultural influences in artistic expression. This composition invites a nuanced exploration of cultural amalgamation and artistic innovation, offering valuable insights into the intricate interplay between tradition and modernity, heritage and innovation. Through an in-depth analysis of *Kwadehyewa*, this article contributes to the ongoing discourse surrounding intercultural artistic endeavours, shedding light on the dynamic processes of cultural exchange and creative synthesis in contemporary music.

Interculturalism as a Conceptual Framework: Justification and Application

Interculturalism is embedded within the study's conceptual framework—a paradigm that mirrors the ethos of *Kwadehyewa*. Interculturalism embodies the confluence of disparate cultural narratives, cultivating a platform where diversity is embraced, and accord is reached through a celebration of divergence. An intricate collage of theoretical pillars exists within this dynamic landscape.

The exploration of Chang's theory of traditional materials in creative works (2001) is an integral lens through which *Kwadehyewa* assumes its artistic manifestation. This theory accentuates the pertinence of infusing traditional materials as founts of inspiration in creative endeavours. *Kwadehyewa* embraces Chang's theory by immersing itself in the opulent reservoir of indigenous African music. The composition aligns with the principles of this theory by weaving indigenous African music's distinctive qualities and aesthetics into its very fabric. The result is a composition reverberating with echoes of cultural heritage while embarking on novel sonic explorations. Moreover, Kimberlin and Euba's theory of interculturalism (1995) fortifies the conceptual framework. This theory posits that creative works are enriched through the harmonious coalescence of diverse cultural traditions. *Kwadehyewa* reflects this theory musically by orchestrating a harmonious union of African musical elements with Western compositional techniques. This fusion engenders a cross-pollination of ideas and musical idioms, endowing the composition with a distinctive resonance that transcends traditional boundaries. Drawing further from theoretical foundations, J. H. Kwabena Nketia's syncretic approach to contemporary African composition (1982) resonates deeply with the creative genesis of *Kwadehyewa*. This theory advocates for a syncretic approach that intertwines traditional African music with contemporary compositional practices. *Kwadehyewa* faithfully reflects this approach by synthesising indigenous African musical resources with modern compositional techniques. The result is a dynamic composition that thrives at the nexus of tradition and innovation, resonating with cultural vibrancy.

The theoretical underpinnings—Chang's emphasis on traditional materials, Kimberlin and Euba's intercultural proposition, and Nketia's syncretic outlook—collectively serve as critical components that infuse *Kwadehyewa* with depth and cultural resonance. Within the intercultural framework, the composition is a living testament to the harmonious symphony of global traditions.

Reimagining: Analysing the Original Composition

The origins of *Kwadehyewa* can be traced back to its foundational research project.¹ This section embarks on a meticulous exploration, dissecting the origin and early development of the composition. By unravelling the intricate interplay of concepts, themes, and theoretical threads that were initially woven together, this deconstruction unveils the intellectual foundation from which *Kwadehyewa* eventually emerged, within the original project's comprehensive elucidation of the embryonic ideas, thematic motifs, and conceptual seeds that grew within the research project's framework. It offers a glimpse into the evolutionary trajectory of the composition, illustrating how scholarly inquiry transformed into artistic expression.

The original composition, *Asamanasaw*, is a two-movement instrumental contemporary program music piece that draws upon ancestral reverence in African traditional religion to evoke a homecoming of the ancestors through dance. The instrumentation comprises the piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet in B flat, bassoon, contrabassoon, flugelhorn, violins I and II, viola, cello, and contrabass. During its creation, I stumbled upon Ghanaian-Mfantse-Asafo indigenous tunes, *Kwadehyewa* and *Woewie Kobina*, during fieldwork. These melodies underwent restructuring and development to become the leading and supporting themes for the first movement of *Asamanasaw*. Additionally, the instruments captured and recreated natural sounds such as bird-songs and the rustling of the wind to infuse the music with vibrant sonic colour. The original composition should have prioritised text; the primary focus was on using instruments alone to draw the musical narrative. *Kwadehyewa*, serving as the opening movement of *Asamanasaw*, is composed in the intercultural spirit. This movement seeks to create a polyphonic structure by artistically intertwining independent rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. It breathes life into the narrative of summoning and inviting all *nananom nsamanfo* (ancestors) to partake in the dance. This sensation is portrayed by each featured instrument employing its distinct melody or rhythmic pattern to complement one another, akin to a concerto style. Notably, *Kwadehyewa* was primarily used to develop the second part of the first movement of *Asamanasaw*. This rendition of *Kwadehyewa* lacks text, emphasising the instrumentation and acoustic interplay within the piece.

The music comprises three distinct sections, following a simple ternary structure (A' || :BA' : ||) with an introductory segment. The introduction spans 66 measures and is atonal. It undergoes metric modulation, transitioning from a simple quadruple meter to a compound duple meter. Subsequently, the first section, 'A' (in C Major), encompasses 53 measures (mm. 66–119). The 'B' section, commencing at measure 120, is a short diversion set in the parallel major key (E flat Major) and concludes at measure 163 with a brief modulation to the parallel minor (C minor). The third section is a variation of 'A' spanning 24 measures (mm. 164 to 188) and also resides in C Major. Notably, the composition incorporates hocket and hemiola as standard compositional techniques. Its time signature is 3/8.

The setting envisioned for this musical piece is a tranquil cemetery, conceptualised in two overarching sections. The first part unfolds in a free music style, incorporating sounds of insects (depicted in the piccolo), birdsongs (represented by the flutes and oboes), a dirge, and other atmospheric effects to evoke the essence of an African cemetery, lending it an eerie ambience. The notational complexities of recreating this scene are resolved through gliding intervallic effects that employ freer rhythms, microtonal devices, and dissonance, as shown in figures 1 and 2. The opening bars (1–15) transition to a slow dirge with a duodecad sonority accompaniment, spanning 18 measures starting at bar 16. This is followed by semi-demi quaver rising passages symbolising the ancestral rise (bars 34–42). A brief excerpt introduces the main melody; subsequently, the (A || :BA' : ||) sections follow in sequence.

¹ As part of my Master of Philosophy program in Music theory and composition at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, I created a two-movement musical composition in 2015. The piece was based on the concept of life after death in the African traditional religion, specifically ancestral veneration. I drew upon the theories of interculturalism and syncretism, and incorporated post-tonality framework and 20th-century compositional techniques to create a programmatic work. The result was an imaginative piece that depicted African ancestors emerging from their tombs and engaging in a vibrant dance.

The image shows the opening of the orchestral score for 'Asamasaw'. It consists of six staves: Piccolo, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon, and Contrabassoon. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 35. The Piccolo part starts with a series of six chords, each marked with a 'p' (piano) dynamic. The Flute, Oboe, and Clarinet in Bb parts enter in the second measure with a melodic line, marked with a 'p' dynamic. The Bassoon and Contrabassoon parts are silent throughout this section.

Figure 1. The opening of *Asamasaw*.

Figure 2. The exposition of some musical concepts employed in the composition of *Asamasaw*.²

a) *Woewie Kobina*³

A single staff of music in 3/8 time, featuring a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, starting with a 'p' dynamic marking.

b) *Kwadehyewa*⁴

Three staves of music in 3/8 time. The first staff shows a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, starting with a 'p' dynamic. The second and third staves show a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes, also starting with a 'p' dynamic. A measure number '18' is indicated at the beginning of the third staff.

² Access the full orchestral score from: 'Asamasaw': A twenty-first-century African classicism on the dance of the dead (ucc.edu.gh).

³ Derived from the field recording, which can be accessed here: <https://mega.nz/file/crgm3Iqb#eeq8HvPNxlOnbKKQh2CIVY6PYp-WrJQnvh1U0CWIYY4>

⁴ Derived from the field recording, which can be accessed here: https://mega.nz/file/92JH1YLZ#ePd6qWCMB0XiqkQCRgBupTX0TKGXs_MqnoSDhaQU4eI

c) Chirping/Insect sound⁵

d) Bird song⁶

e) Duodecad sonority

f) Creaky rhythmic pattern

g) Blowing wind⁷

h) Bang effect

⁵ Derived from the field recording, which can be accessed here:
https://mega.nz/file/Mno1jZSZ#0MPQazaYN4MKd9ib7EnwIcL6jE12W5_H1tGsQ28rGko

⁶ Derived from the field recording, which can be accessed here:
https://mega.nz/file/pixxBBjb#Cy8xO2Xi37B7bZad_I-6_m6SflXe3RztONH-kfTV2pU

⁷ Derived from the field recording, which can be accessed here:
<https://mega.nz/file/sn5BSYTT#9p5pFvYcfKD3Xk-CfX7caNVbuZAMlqDnEjrR0tG3FgU>

Adapting the Composition to a Trio⁸

At the heart of the transformative journey of *Kwadehyewa* lies its evolution from a conceptual inception to a tangible trio arrangement. This section intricately unveils the creative fusion of voice, clarinet, and piano into a harmonious opus. Navigating the intricate web of timbral relationships, harmonic intersections, and melodic interplay, this section delves into the meticulous choreography required to breathe life into this trio arrangement. The orchestration process is methodically unravelled, shedding light on the decisions that guided the transformation of *Kwadehyewa*'s core essence into a composition that thrives within the melodic nuances of each instrument and their collective synergy. Through this exploration, the section illuminates how the composition's overarching narrative maintains its resonance while unfolding through distinct musical voices.

As requested by a Ghanaian singer as part of the Contemporary Performance and Composition (CoPeCo)⁹ program, this musical composition was crafted for its inaugural performance.¹⁰ The CoPeCo program aims to educate experienced musicians and composers in contemporary music, emphasising new technology, improvisation, and collaboration. Furthermore, this reduction project was undertaken with a strong inclination towards twentieth-century compositional styles and techniques, deeply rooted in the concept of "throwback" or *sankofa*, signifying a cultural return to African roots while aiming to project African narratives. The singer specifically requested a composition for voice, B-flat clarinet, and piano, with a thematic focus on the consequences of irresponsibility and greed in Ghanaian local politics.

In crafting this composition, I made a deliberate artistic decision to work with the template provided by the singer, reducing the first movement of *Asamanasaw* to a trio format. This entailed using the primary two themes from *Asamanasaw*, with a heightened emphasis on conveying textual and thematic elements. These indigenous themes, central to the first movement's development, carried profound messages. Through fieldwork¹¹ and consultations with resource persons, it was revealed that *Kwadehyewa* is a chant traditionally used by the local militia (*Asafo*) to inspire and motivate themselves before the battle. Its lyrics convey a patriotic call for a collective engagement in a common quest and interest. Conversely, *Woewie Kobina* is a powerful *Asafo* chant to mock those who fail to seize opportunities to do good, resulting in shame and ridicule. The amalgamation of these two themes served as the core motivation for this recomposition. The composition aimed to lend its voice to the call for Ghanaian leaders to govern with purpose and accountability, warning of dire emotional and psychological consequences when they fail.

The structure of this reduction closely mirrors the original composition but introduces a new theme, *Akwasi Fori* (shown in figure 3). The composition comprises a total of 123 measures, divided into distinct sections: the A section spanning measures 1 to 56, the B section encompassing measures 57 to 97, and finally, the A' section spanning measures 98 to 123. In its transformed state, *Kwadehyewa* manifests the complete "call-and-dance" initially segmented within *Asamanasaw* as separate movements. The commencement of the piece with an Akan dirge, *Akwasi Fori*, and the incorporation of textual elements align with the thematic call in the first movement of *Asamanasaw*. It should not be regarded as a mere imitation but a condensed rendition

⁸ Link to the premiere performance of *Kwadehyewa* at KMH (April 12, 2019): <https://youtu.be/2GyoTstF-B8>.

⁹ CoPeCo stands as a distinctive two-year joint Masters program, providing students with an expansive platform for experimental artistic exploration within a European context. Integrating composition, interpretation, improvisation, and cutting-edge technologies, the program offers a comprehensive approach to musical education. Spanning four partner institutions across Estonia, Sweden, France, and Germany, CoPeCo offers a rare opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the vibrant contemporary music scene while fostering collaboration with artists from diverse disciplines and cultural backgrounds.

¹⁰ Performed by Ryszard Alzin, a pianist, Melanie Vibrac, a clarinetist, and Sandra Kuntu-Blankson (the Ghanaian singer) at the Kungliga Musikhogskolan in Stockholm (KMH), on April 12, 2019.

¹¹ During my research project *Asamanasaw* in 2015, as part of my methodology, I conducted fieldwork to gather musical resources for creative development. On a typical Saturday, I visited Anafo, a suburb of Cape Coast, where it was a common sight to witness the local militia, known as the *Anafo Asafo*, performing music. Intrigued by this regular occurrence, I seized the opportunity to engage with the community and seek inspiration for my project. During these visits, I immersed myself in the musical traditions of *Anafo*, observing and participating in performances whenever possible. One such encounter led me to witness the *Anafo Asafo* honouring a deceased relative through their musical expressions. Eager to delve deeper into their practices, I requested to join the ensemble and play the *dawurnta* (double gong). After receiving permission from the group's leader, I recorded the medley and later returned to my studio to analyse and study the recordings. Seeking further understanding of the historical and cultural significance of the medley, I interviewed one of the members, Nana Akoto. This dialogue provided valuable insights that influenced my artistic choices moving forward. Ultimately, I decided to incorporate elements from the medley, particularly *Woewie Kobina* and *Kwadehyewa*, into my research project, utilising them as foundational material for creative exploration and development.

of *Asamanasaw Akwasi Fori* is a well-known Ghanaian dirge traditionally performed to honour the deceased. When played outside of its customary funeral context, it evokes a sense of unease and tension, a quality harnessed within this composition. Here, the voice artfully articulates it through a humming effect, enhancing the evocative atmosphere that underscores the narrative. In this musical piece, the dirge reflects the distress and discomfort experienced when society withdraws its support from persons they entrusted their livelihood to due to irresponsible behaviour.



Figure 3. *Akwasi Fori* (transcribed for *Kwadehyewa*).

Following the introductory section featuring the duodecad sonority and the hummed dirge, the clarinet takes the lead in a subsequent passage. This passage serves as a call from the music's voices to the *nananom* (ancestors), seeking their inspiration, guidance, and courage to voice the concerns at hand. The piano provides cinematic commentary, accompanied by ululation effects from the voice, further underscoring the gravity of the scene and its message (illustrated in figure 4).



Figure 4. The opening of the call to the *nananom*.

The successful execution of these passages signifies a meaningful connection with the ancestors, a blessing and a surge of courage to convey the message to its intended recipients. Subsequently, a brief unison rising music bridge paves the way for the singer to deliver the message. The message is presented eloquently, adopting a chant-like and spoken delivery style, complemented by drum-like accompaniments in the piano and clarinet parts, as shown in figure 5. This rhythmic intensity vividly illustrates the drum-like nature of African militia music, emphasising the seriousness of the message and its subject matter.

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the Singer (S) in treble clef, with lyrics 'mbe dzi koo koo Kwa de hyewa'ei Kwa de hyewa'ei'. The middle staff is for the B♭ Clarinet (Cl.) in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp. The bottom staff is for the Piano (Pno.) in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, while the clarinet part provides a melodic line with some grace notes. The number '161' is written below the piano staff.

Figure 5. An excerpt of the Message.

Analysis of the Text/Translation of the Piece

According to the information gathered from the knowledgeable individuals encountered during fieldwork, it has been observed that when *Kwadehyewa* is performed in the traditional *Asafo* setting, singers prefix the phonetic embellishment /ε/ before singing the term “Kwadehyewa.” This prefix holds no specific semantic meaning but instead serves as a phonetic ornamentation influenced by the nuances of the *Mfantse* language. Within the realm of oral tradition exists a narrative of historical civil conflicts between various tribes and ethnic groups. By one of these folk narratives, the composition title, *Kwadehyewa*, assumes the status of an idiomatic expression that glorifies bravery during warfare while kindling a profound sense of patriotism.¹² This mode of communication is typical in traditional African societies, where the wise and elderly often employ groups of words whose meanings are not immediately apparent from the individual words they comprise. This practice maintains a veil of secrecy, mainly when communicating with those for whom the message is intended, especially in the presence of unfamiliar individuals. This enigmatic aspect of such expressions represents a hallmark of linguistic specificity commonly found in traditional African societies. This folk tune’s narrative traces its origins to a marginalised indigenous community residing along the Southern coastal region of Oguaa,¹³ embroiled in conflicts over land ownership. Despite sharing a common ethnicity, the divisions stemming from social class distinctions and disputes over the actual native status of the land incited a civil conflict within this community. *Kwadehyewa* emerged as one of the few songs chanted during the turbulent unrest. It serves as a poignant reminder of the vulnerabilities that a lack of patriotism can expose a nation to, often orchestrated by leadership unbeknownst to the general populace.

In the B section of the composition, the text reiterates the uncertainty inherent in the future. It underscores the importance of identifying and addressing unpatriotic individuals who actively hinder those striving to contribute positively to their own well-being and that of society. It sheds light on karma, illustrating how life’s events operate in cyclical patterns. Patriotism, it emphasises, is a trait that is neither inherent nor inherited;

¹² Nana Akoto. Interview by the author. Cape Coast, February 2, 2022.

¹³ *Oguaa* is the traditional name of Cape Coast, the capital of the central region of Ghana.

instead, it is acquired through learning, observation, and lived experiences. As languages naturally evolve, the text of this folk tune has not remained untouched by this phenomenon, with modifications observed in the *Mfantse* lines of the song over the years.

Text of the piece in Mfantse	Meaning
W'oaka n'ahye dan mu'a Kobina -Ei!- Woe wie oh (4x)	An expression used to indicate karma has hit and the individual has been stripped of dignity or grounded. In this music, it translates to the fall of Kobina.
Kwadehyewa ei, Kwadehyewa ei Nyimpa obedzi kookoo mbedzi kookoo Kwadehyewa ei Kwadehyewa ei Nyimpa obedzi kookoo mbedzi kookoo Kwadehyewa ei, Kwadehyewa ei Ei! Kwadehyewa ei Kookoo nyi o ayeeeee!	The Royals of Battle "He who yearns to taste or eat piles, should come and taste it." "This is the blood, o ayeeeee!"
Ao! Ao! Ao! Ao! Ao! Mewu'o!	<i>(this is a mere exclamation of intense emotion)</i>
Da bi aseɛm, obi nnyim Na'entsir twi twa fo Hwɛ yie Da bi obo du wo do O!	No one knows tomorrow, "Enemies of Progress" Be careful; Karma will surely visit you!
Kwadehyewa ei, Kwadehyewa ei Ei! Kwadehyewa ei Ao! Ao! Ao! Mewu'o!	The Royals of Battle <i>(exclamation of intense emotion)</i>
(instrument)... Da bi aseɛm obi nnyim ɔman bɔe fo, mese hwɛ yie (spoken) Da bi obo du wo do O! ... Kwadehyewa ei, (instrument) ... Kwadehyewa ei Ao! Ao! Ao! Mewu'o!	No one knows tomorrow Unpatriotic people, I say, indeed, Be careful; Karma will surely visit you.
Kwadehyewa ei, (Ei!) Kwadehyewa ei Nyimpa obedzi kookoo mbedzi kookoo Kwadehyewa ei Kwadehyewa ei Nyimpa obedzi kookoo mbedzi kookoo Kwadehyewa ei, Kwadehyewa ei Ei! Kwadehyewa ei Kookoo nyi o ayeeeee!	The Royals of Battle "He who yearns to taste or eat piles, should come and taste it."

Commentary on the Message

The simplicity of the text derives its strength from its profound message. Patriotism, a fundamental social value, has regrettably dwindled in significance in the contemporary era. To underscore its importance, the reduction of the text in the composition's second section, particularly the recitative segments, draws deeply from the folklore upon which the song was originally crafted. Modern times have witnessed an undue elevation of individual rights at the expense of their corresponding responsibilities. It has become somewhat unusual to advocate for the love of one's homeland, as this sentiment is often disregarded among those who give little to no consideration to such matters. It is essential to recognise that not everyone is suited for every task; similarly, artistic creations naturally gravitate towards specific themes or concepts. In the case of this composition, it is a celebration of one's attachment to their homeland. Moreover, the text serves as a touching reminder of the repercussions that negligent citizenship can bring upon a society. It echoes the cyclical nature of life and reinforces the principles of the natural order, which indeed are more intricate than they might seem.

The concluding part of the text directs a critical commentary towards the leadership within the continent. It highlights the pervasive issue of purposeless governance, a predicament that has plunged many African states into the abyss of debt, corruption, and unstable economies. This predicament, deeply rooted in history, has persisted due to a recurring lack of accountability from the upper echelons of government officials down

to the masses, hampering the overall development of Africa. In many ways, the past few decades have resembled a dubious imitation of Westernisation, all in the guise of creating a progressive society. Nevertheless, the outcomes consistently lead to regression. While the narrative of colonisation has undeniably left an indelible mark on the continent, it is increasingly manifesting as a convenient excuse for seeking assistance without earnestly exerting tangible efforts to uplift the Black community.

Summary and Conclusion

This paper delves into the journey of *Kwadehyewa*, examining its inception, transformation into a trio, and the creative decisions driving its evolution. Through this analysis, it elucidates the intricate process of artistic creation, wherein scholarly concepts intertwine with musical expression. By scrutinising the interplay between conceptual frameworks and compositional realisation, it unveils *Kwadehyewa's* metamorphosis into a symbol of cultural resonance and innovative musicality. Additionally, this article focuses on the exploration of *Kwadehyewa's* compositional evolution, intercultural resonance, and theoretical foundations. It synthesises the analysis of the original project, its trio arrangement, and architectural decisions into a cohesive narrative. Moreover, it discusses the role of interculturalism and the relationship between theory and practice. The paper not only highlights the significance of *Kwadehyewa's* transformation but also suggests future avenues for scholarly and artistic inquiry. It emphasises *Kwadehyewa's* potential as a catalyst for further exploration, promoting a harmonious interplay between scholarship, artistry, and cultural enrichment.

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Kwadehyewa: kviečiant tarpkultūrinio dialogo

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama Nana'os Amowee Dawsono kompozicijos *Kwadehyewa* (2019) kelionė: jos atsiradimas, instrumentuotės transformacija į trio ir kūrybiniai sprendimai, lėmę jos evoliuciją. Kūrinio analizė atveria sudėtingą kūrybos procesą, kuriame mokslinės koncepcijos pinasi su muzikine išraiška. Nagrinėjant conceptualaus sumanymo ir kompozicinės realizacijos sąveiką, atskleidžiama *Kwadehyewa* metamorfozė, kai kompozicija tampa kultūrinį rezonansą ir novatorišką muzikavimą stimuliuojančia erdve. Ypač daug dėmesio skiriama tarpkultūriškumo problemai, jos teoriniam ir praktiniam aspektams. Mūsų dienomis, kai šiuolaikinėje muzikoje vis dažniau tarpsta tarpkultūriniai dialogai, *Kwadehyewa* yra viena meninių raiškų, leidžiančių nagrinėti skirtingų (afrikietiškos ir europietiškos) kultūrų įtakų suartėjimą muzikinėje plotmėje.