

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION  
The University of Michigan  
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Kwasi Ampene, associate professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, is recommended for promotion to professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	1999	University of Pittsburgh
M.M.	1994	West Virginia University
Dip	1990	University of Ghana

Professional Record:

2019-present	Associate Professor, Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS), University of Michigan
2011-2019	Associate Professor, School of Music, Theater and Dance (SMTD) and Department of Afroamerican and African Studies (DAAS), University of Michigan
2007-2011	Associate Professor of Ethnomusicology, College of Music, University of Colorado-Boulder
2000-2007	Assistant Professor of Ethnomusicology, College of Music, University of Colorado-Boulder
1999-2000	King, Chavez, Parks Visiting Professor of Music, Departments of Music/Art, and Africana Studies, University of Michigan-Flint

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Ampene has taught important core courses in DAAS (e.g., “Africa and Its Diaspora” and “Introduction to African Studies”), as well as numerous special topics courses on African music, visuality, and the performing arts. As a performer, a musicologist, and the director of the Center for World Performance Studies (CWPS), Professor Ampene consistently integrated live African performances in all of his African Studies courses. Professor Ampene has also organized two undergraduate study-abroad programs to Ghana. As such, he is one of a handful of musicologists in LSA who has introduced students to the central contributions of African musicians and performers to global artistic culture.

Research: Professor Ampene’s scholarship, teaching, and service must be understood as cross-disciplinary. As an ethnomusicologist he studies the creation and performance of African music (specifically the royal music of the Asante Court in Ghana). Beyond addressing traditions of musical composition, as with all musicologists, Professor Ampene also studies the genealogy of musical instruments and their sound across a historical trajectory. Additionally, he focuses on the history of performance styles, and the social roles played by individual musicians. Therefore, as someone who also has a broad audience in LSA fields such as African Studies and DAAS, Professor Ampene brings a unique dimension to the humanities, given his in-depth comparative research on the evolution and changing social and political role of music in Ghana

during the pre-colonial era, during British rule, and from independence in 1957 to the present. Precisely because ethnomusicology is not a field within LSA, Professor Ampene brings a valuable set of research questions and skill sets not duplicated by any other Africanist in the College.

There is little doubt that Professor Ampene will continue to produce important and innovative studies of the rich musical cultures of the African continent, especially Ghana. Indeed, his new projects expand on his detailed work at the royal Asante court, while also attending to the education of the American musical ear to African rhythms. In-progress works include: *Mnemonics*, *Timelines*, *Drum Patterns*, and *African Rhythms in Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, and the proposed textbook Hip Hop in Africa.

Recent and Significant Publications:

Asante Court Music and Verbal Arts in Ghana: The Porcupine and the Gold Stool. London and New York: Routledge Press, 2020.

“Iconography, Documentary Evidence, Continuity, and Akan Musical Expressions Before the 15th Century.” *Ghana Studies* 22 (2019): 191-205.

Edited with Nana Kwadwo Nyantakyi III, Engaging Modernity: Asante in the Twenty-First Century. 2nd edition. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Publishing, 2016.

“One on One: Max Roach in Conversation with Kofi Ghanaba.” *American Music Research Center Journal* 20 (2012): 1-26.

Service: From 2011-2016, Professor Ampene reorganized the governing structure of the Center for World Performance Studies (CWPS), while also launching a Graduate Certificate in Performance Studies. As the associate director of the Stearns Collection (2017) he provided a new home for the university’s musical instruments. In 2018, he served on the planning committee for the provost’s three-nation African tour, and in June 2018, he joined the provost’s delegation to Ghana. Well recognized internationally, he has also helped organize important professional meetings, including the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM), the African Studies Association (ASA), and the African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA).

External Reviewers:

Reviewer (A): “Ampene’s *Asante Court Music*...is a work of signal importance.... With this book, Ampene consolidates his position as the pre-eminent scholar of Asante musical culture.”

Reviewer (B): “*Asante Court Music* (2020) is a finely detailed monograph that will stand, along with *Engaging Modernity* (2016), as a definitive study of one of the most important royal court cultures in Africa, dating back to the seventeenth century.”

Reviewer (C): “All of Prof. Ampene’s output whether film or print-based is outstanding, innovative, and most important, gives central place to African thought and knowledge—which in the spirit of decolonising the curriculum, is so crucial.”

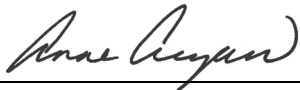
Reviewer (D): “Prof. Ampene...has produced a deeply insightful portrait of Asante music and culture. For this accomplishment alone, Prof. Ampene deserves promotion to full professor.”

Reviewer (E): “Prof. Ampene is at the top of his cohort in his field (Black music) and his discipline (Ethnomusicology, African Studies). His production of monographs, articles, and other publications is unsurpassed by his colleagues both in quantity and quality.”

Reviewer (F): “Dr. Ampene’s research and publication will be remembered and highly valued for generations to come.”

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Ampene’s accomplishments have provided both his department and the campus at large with a unique interdisciplinary understanding of the crucial role of cultural performances in everyday life. He is an internationally respected scholar on the royal music of the Asante Court in Ghana, and a leading scholar in the emerging field of ethnomusicology, exemplified by both his written published work as well as his documentary filmmaking. The Executive Committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and I recommend that Associate Professor Kwasi Ampene be promoted to the rank of professor of Afroamerican and African studies, with tenure, in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.



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Anne Curzan, Dean  
Geneva Smitherman Collegiate Professor of  
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Arthur F. Thurnau Professor  
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