

Sammy Otoo and the Revolution of Bass Guitar Patterns in Ghanaian Gospel Praise Songs

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Abstract

Sammy Otoo is regarded as one of Ghana's most influential bass guitar players, whose bass patterns have significantly shaped the sound of Ghanaian gospel praise songs. His bass lines have become the standard for modern bass players in this genre and are often used as benchmarks during auditions and recruitment by gospel bands. However, scholarly exploration of his approach to revolutionising bass guitar patterns in Ghanaian gospel praise songs has been limited. This study explores Sammy Otoo's contribution to bass guitar technique, examining the thematic concepts embedded in his bass patterns and aims to preserve his legacy. Using a case study and discographic research designs, the findings show that Sammy Otoo, a self-taught musician, developed his technique through a combination of records and sheet music. His deep knowledge of multiple music genres allowed him to blend conventional patterns, such as 'walking' and 'substitution', while incorporating melodic motifs from various musical traditions. These innovative approaches make his rhythm and pitch organisation unpredictable, contrary to conventional bass guitar patterns used in Ghanaian gospel praise songs. It is concluded that Sammy Otoo revolutionised the bass guitar patterns in this genre, influencing a new generation of bass players. Music instructors, curriculum developers, and performers are encouraged to integrate his techniques and recordings into instructional and performance practices. Also, institutions and individuals involved in African popular music education are expected to adopt Sammy Otoo's contributions as essential learning material, with the view to reflecting the dynamic evolution of Ghanaian popular/gospel music and to reimagining instrumental roles to inspire future generations of musicians.

Keywords: Bass guitar patterns, bass players, gospel praise songs, revolution, Sammy Otoo, technique

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1. Introduction

The defining role of the bass guitar in popular music cannot be overemphasised, in that a song's identity is usually dependent on the bass pattern. In other words, people can connect a bass pattern to its corresponding song. The bass guitar has also significantly enhanced and defined the soundscape of many popular music forms, including reggae, jazz, rumba, samba, funk, salsa, soukous, and highlife (Coffie, 2018). According to Herber (2010), the bass player's role in a band is to connect the rhythmic and melodic components acoustically. Additionally, the music's background is formed by the bass and drums. The bass guitar's traditional role is to enhance a band's sound by playing in a way that allows its percussive components to support, provide power, and create groove. Moreover, the instrument adds thunder to live performances, as heard at concerts. With the slightest touch of any of the four strings of this intriguing instrument, the lower frequencies can be heard resonating from the ground when amplified and played via a good sound setup. The bass player's primary goal is to establish a foundational and often more consistent beat. This is accomplished by the drummer serving as the band's "rhythm section" and intentionally repeating a song. The more complex melodies created by the higher-range instruments should ideally be supported melodically by the bass guitar's lower range.

It is instructive to note that while the upright bass has been integral to the instrumental resources of highlife bands in Ghana since the early 1900s, the electric bass was introduced to highlife bands around the 1970s. Highlife bass players employ two melodic-rhythmic templates: "walking bass" and "substitution bass" (Coffie, 2020a). While the walking bass pattern emphasises the basic pulse of the songs and is also a result of the influence of swing music, the substitution bass pattern, on the other hand, employs fewer notes with or without syncopations, which is due to the transfer of the playing technique of the *prenprensiwa* (indigenous lamellophone) onto the bass. The emergence of burger highlife around the early 1980s, influenced by funk and disco, brought the idea of bass players personalising their bass lines, distinct from walking and substitution bass patterns, which also became a distinguishing feature of recognising specific highlife songs and styles (Coffie, 2023). We wish to emphasise that bass players such as Dr. Sogah, Slim Bright, Ralph Karikari, Macky Flash, Sir Marshall, Zapp Mallet, Emmanuel Koomson, Dan Grahl, among others, have contributed to the development of various popular music forms in Ghana with their individual brilliance on the bass guitar over the years.

A retrospective view of the Ghanaian popular music scene over the past three decades shows a trend toward bass guitar patterns in recorded highlife-gospel songs, usually associated with classical Pentecostal churches such as The Apostolic Church-Ghana, Church of Pentecost, Assemblies of God, and Christ Apostolic Church International. These songs, also referred to as “Pentecostal Praise Songs”, are congregational songs used in the worship of the above-mentioned churches in praise and adoration to God. A preliminary investigation reveals that the new trend of bass guitar patterns in modern recorded Ghanaian gospel praise songs and live performances originated from Sammy Otoo. Sammy Otoo is one of Ghana’s most revered and influential bass players and has been a prominent figure in the Ghanaian gospel music scene for over three decades, featuring prominently in the repertoires of gospel artistes and bands. Interestingly, in some instances, his bass patterns serve as a reference for gospel bands auditioning and recruiting bass players. Therefore, in this study, we explore Sammy Otoo’s contribution to bass guitar technique, examine the thematic concepts embedded in his bass patterns, and aim to preserve his legacy. We use the term “revolution” in this study to refer to a shift away from the conventional way of playing bass guitar patterns in Ghanaian gospel praise songs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was based on Maslow’s (1991, 1971) Humanistic Theory of Personality, which has been widely explored in humanistic psychology. According to Abraham Maslow, people achieve their full potential by moving from basic needs to self-actualisation, which also requires providing a thriving environment that allows them to fulfil their unique potential. Rogers (1959) also argued that society’s demands do not always support the individual’s self-actualisation, and one may be compelled to live under conditions that may stifle one’s potential. In other words, the individual finds themselves in a deterministic milieu, meaning they must mitigate their way out to achieve self-actualisation. This theory is relevant to the study because Sammy Otoo, the individual under investigation, began with humble beginnings and had no formal music education. Although music was everything to him from his boyhood days onward, he did not have the opportunity to pursue it at a higher level. However, that did not deter him from achieving his goal. Sammy immersed himself in self-education by purchasing music books, audio recordings, audiovisual materials, and learning bass lines from diverse popular music genres. The results are inevitable in his works.

2.2 Overview of the Gospel Music Scene in Ghana

Gospel music, which encompasses Pentecostal praise songs, is generally considered the predominant genre in Ghana’s socio-cultural music scene. It accounts for about 60% of Ghana’s commercial recording output (Collins, 2018). This trend can be traced back to the decline of the live music scene in the late 1970s, which was influenced by Ghana’s socio-political and economic milieu. Several factors contributed to the decline of this phenomenon in the late 1970s, including the imposition of heavy taxes on musical instruments and sound equipment, a two-and-a-half-year curfew, and economic mismanagement by the then-government (Coffie, 2020a; Collins, 2006; Kudonu et. al., 2021). The above-mentioned factors created an unfavourable milieu for musicians to ply their trade; hence, musicians could no longer afford to purchase musical instruments and sound equipment. Moreover, several highlife bands folded up because nightlife came to a halt. Consequently, several highlife musicians migrated abroad; those who stayed in Ghana saw the church as a haven where they could ply their trade. The church, on the other hand, had the financial muscle to purchase musical instruments and sound equipment, which were essential to musicians.

It is worth noting that before the decline of the Ghanaian live music scene in the late 1970s, gospel and church music, in general, thrived on song lyrics, as evidenced in the works of gospel musicians such as Kofi Abraham, Yaw Ofori, Joyful Way, among others. Also, the use and performance of music in Ghanaian churches at that time did not require highly skilled musicians, unlike in highlife bands, where skill was a priority, as Coffie (2023) observed. Considering Coffie’s observation, one may infer that the exodus of highlife musicians to Ghanaian churches in the late 1970s led to a shift in Ghana’s gospel music soundscape, in which instrumental arrangements began to receive equal attention with the song lyrics. According to Donkor (2013), the movement of highlife musicians into churches is significant to the development of gospel music, as it contributed to its popularisation. Collins (2018), corroborating Donkor’s view, informed that highlife composers and vocalists such as Ebo Taylor, Kofi Ani Johnson, A.B. Crentsil, C.K. Mann, Paapa Yankson, Jewel Ackah, Bob Pinodo, Pat Thomas, among others, began composing and singing gospel-highlife songs due to prevailing circumstances in Ghana. Similarly, highlife instrumentalists such as Smart Nkansah, Ralph Karikari, Osei Tutu, Bessa Simons, Slim Bright, Macky Flash, Sir Marshall, among others, also began playing gospel-highlife recordings. This phenomenon has enhanced Ghana’s gospel music soundscape since the 1980s, with instrumental arrangements receiving equal attention alongside the song lyrics. The works of gospel artistes and groups such as Tagoe Sisters,

Stella Seal, Daughters of Glorious Jesus, Yaw Sarpong, Cindy Thompson, Diana Hamilton, Joe Mettle and many others exemplify the above phenomenon. It is instructive to note that the churches have become the hub of musical training in Ghana, and almost all the current prominent musicians (vocalists/instrumentalists) began their musical training in the church.

2.3 Underrepresented Industry Players in Ghanaian Popular Music Scholarship

There has been a substantial increase in popular music studies in Africa, particularly in Ghana, over the past few years. These studies, however, tend to focus on music's sociocultural, religious, economic, and political uses (Ajose, 2024; Atiemo, 2006; Carl, 2014; Collins, 2005; Emielu & Donkor, 2019; Lamont, 2010; Parsitau, 2006, 2008; Sunu Doe, 2020; Sylvanus & Eze, 2021; Sylvanus & Ezeugwu, 2024). Despite the gains made so far, a critical knowledge gap remains and warrants scholarly attention. For instance, industry players such as songwriters, music producers, background vocalists, and instrumentalists are often underrepresented in Ghanaian music scholarship. This disparity arises because some industry players do not receive credit for their efforts. Scholars typically ascribe the inventiveness of the above-mentioned industry players to the mainstream "individual artistes", "front artistes" or "lead vocalists" of a group (Brew, 2019, 2023; Donkor, 2013; Obeng, 2015; Aidoo, 2019). Despite efforts by some scholars to recover their contributions, these industry players are underrepresented in popular music studies due to their inherent anonymity. Notwithstanding, scholarly works by Boahen (2015), Collins (2016), Coffie (2019, 2020b, 2021), Coffie et. al. (2020), Coffie et. al. (2022), and Owusu-Poku (2021) are worth commending. The above-mentioned studies highlight the relevance and contributions of industry players — such as composers, arrangers, instrumentalists, music producers, and background vocalists — to the music industry, which are surprisingly underrepresented in Ghanaian music scholarship. Although these studies have augmented the scholarly oeuvres of popular music in Ghana and across Africa, this, however, appears to be insignificant and a "drop in the ocean". We argue that industry players such as instrumentalists are the "architects" and "executors" of a songwriter's sound, in that they give songs a physical form by creating the sounds that distinguish one song from another. Therefore, their continuous underrepresentation in popular music studies, which could lead to the loss of their legacy, is worrying. Sammy Otoo, one of Ghana's most revered bass players, has been a significant presence on Pentecostal praise song recordings in Ghana over the past three decades. As a result, his bass patterns have become the quintessence of Ghanaian gospel praise songs in modern times. It is quite surprising that the legacy of such an iconic contributor to Ghana's music soundscape lives only in the memory of those who have encountered him. Against this background, we unravel Sammy Otoo's persona and examine the thematic concepts of his bass guitar patterns in Ghanaian gospel praise songs, thereby preserving his legacy for posterity.

3. Method

We employed a case study research design to examine Sammy Otoo's deterministic approach to revolutionising bass guitar patterns in Ghanaian gospel praise songs. This design was appropriate for the objectives of this study, which required a close examination of Sammy Otoo (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2003). Furthermore, the discographic inquiry was employed. Discographic inquiry explores sound recordings for creative works (Acquah, 2022). Hence, we reviewed Ghanaian gospel praise song recordings as secondary data to establish Sammy Otoo's contribution to bass patterns in Ghanaian gospel praise songs. Data for this study were collected through face-to-face interviews with Sammy Otoo. Additionally, document analysis, a systematic review or evaluation of printed and electronic documents (Fischer, 2006), was employed. This instrument described idioms embedded in Sammy Otoo's audio recordings. It was also used to investigate the stylistic trends in Ghanaian gospel praise bass patterns. We also reviewed the bass playing patterns of modern Ghanaian bass players in Pentecostal praise songs through purposive sampling to highlight Sammy Otoo's influence in the Ghanaian gospel music scene. To unravel the thematic concepts in Sammy Otoo's bass guitar patterns, we sampled and reviewed two iconic gospel praise albums, "Appraise Volumes I & II". The albums were recorded by the Soul Winners and released in 1999 and 2003, respectively. These albums were purposively sampled for review because of their topmost popularity among his bass recordings. They also serve as a reference for bass players interested in Ghanaian gospel praise songs.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Sammy Otoo's Early Life and Education

Sammy Otoo was born on April 22, 1974, in Mamprobi, Ghana's Greater Accra Region. He was christened Samuel Laryea Otoo by his parents. His primary education was received at the University of Ghana Basic School, Legon, where his father worked as the manager of the University of Ghana Bookshop. After his basic education, he attended Ebenezer Secondary School at Dansoman, also in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana, from form one to the sixth form, but was unable to graduate due to his strong ambition to pursue music as a career with his

good friend Kenneth Appiah. Sammy Otoo, his elder brother Robert Otoo, Kenneth Appiah and Christian Dankwa had already formed the “Soul Winners”, a music group formally known as “Five Talents” and later “Steel Pulse”, because of reggae music influence on them at the time. Sammy was engrossed in music; therefore, he quit schooling to focus on his musical craft.

4.2 Sammy Otoo’s Musical Life

At age 12, Sammy exhibited a sign of a child prodigy. As a result, his elder brother Robert, who was more into technical stuff, such as electronics, made an acoustic guitar with canned sardine keys as tuning pegs and nylon thread as the guitar strings for him. Unfortunately, Sammy and Robert had no idea how to tune the guitar; nevertheless, they played it as it was. Fortunately, not too long after, a guitarist at their church, Brother Eben, offered to help them tune the guitar. Subsequently, Brother Eben showed them how to tune the guitar and taught them how to play the diatonic scale in tonic solfa (d:r:m:f:s:l:t:d¹). To advance their knowledge in music, they associated themselves with some friends who taught and ministered with the Mount Olivet Methodist Church choir at Dansoman. They then served as apprentices, learning a few things by observing them. Sammy Otoo then sought to learn more about tonic solfa. He narrates: “I was listening to the radio one day when they began to play a song, so I decided to play along, which I successfully did and later managed to learn many songs with the solfege”. Having the aural skill, Sammy could hear the right notes whenever a song was played, which also helped him learn more from the radio. He recalls they had some sheet music with chord transcriptions, but unfortunately, they knew nothing about reading music. All they knew were the chord progressions (I – IV – V), because they often heard them played; however, the diminished chords were the most confusing. Quite surprisingly, Sammy could learn complex chords but could not apply them to songs. Later, things started falling in place; at least he could learn and understand the chords in the music. He had to learn the guitar’s fretboard by ear until he chanced upon a magazine that included the major scale and its fingering position. From there, he expanded his knowledge by teaching himself various fingering postures.

Sammy then attempted to study the rudiments of music from books. He subsequently began comprehending the musical language in those books with much effort, building on the rudiments and theory he had studied at the basic school level. Sammy Otoo then started reading music; however, it was slow because it was self-taught. Interestingly, Abraham Laboriel, a renowned American bass player, was Sammy Otoo’s idol, whom he had never met. However, he was inspired by Abraham Laboriel’s videos that he purchased and learned a few things from them, which he incorporated into his play. Sammy Otoo was internationally influenced by iconic musicians such as Bob Marley, Abraham Laboriel, George Benson, and the Fourplay band, led by bass player Nathan East. Similarly, Ghanaian music greats such as Pat Thomas, Ben Brako and Kofi Abraham influenced him locally. Sammy’s favourite music genres are reggae, jazz, country, and highlife, which, according to him, are original and lyrically deliver great messages to listeners. Soul Winners is the first band Sammy played, and he is the bandleader. Apart from playing all the bass works on the five albums of his band, Soul Winners, Sammy has also trademarked the works of many Ghanaian artistes and groups with his “infectious” groove as a bass player and producer, notably Getty & Friends (Di Masem Ma Me), No Tribe (The Altar Praise Medley), Sam Quaye (Eye Me Ennigye Praise Medley) Esther Clotey, Josh Laryea (Nngboo Album), KODA, and The Synagogue Church Choir. Sammy Otoo is also a sound engineer and the CEO of Cave Studios in Dansoman, Accra, which has produced many gospel songs in Ghana.

4.3 Ghanaian Gospel Praise Songs Bass Patterns

To situate Sammy Otoo’s gospel praise bass patterns in context and appreciate his contribution to Ghanaian gospel music, it is appropriate to briefly discuss the trends in bass patterns in Ghanaian gospel praise songs. As mentioned earlier, highlife guitar and dance band traditions influenced bass patterns, as treasured in Ghanaian gospel praise songs. Before the 1990s, the “walking” bass was the dominant pattern in Ghanaian gospel praise songs. This pattern is also fundamental to the highlife dance band tradition. Syncopation is usually absent; it is predominantly quarter notes, emphasising the song’s basic pulse and the chords’ root notes. Occasionally, bass players may introduce embellishing licks. For instance, the gospel praise song “Nhyira Nka Nyame” by Kofi Abraham and “Moko moko be” by Jude Lomotey employed the walking bass pattern, as illustrated in Figure 1 below.



Fig. 1: Walking Bass Pattern

This bass pattern was played at 135 beats per minute (BPM) over the following chord progressions: $I^9 - IV - I^{11} - VI - V^7 - I$.

Another bass pattern is called “substitution”, quite different from the walking bass. Unlike the walking bass, this pattern does not emphasise the song’s basic pulse. It employs fewer notes, sometimes with octave pairs and ostinato rhythm. It is instructive to note that the rhythms in this pattern can be more sophisticated in syncopation, depending on the player. Elder Mireku’s gospel praise songs usually employ this bass pattern, as illustrated in Figure 2 below.



Fig. 2: Substitution Bass Pattern

This bass pattern is played at 130 beats per minute (BPM) over the following chord progressions: $I - V - I - II - V - I$.

It is instructive to note that the above bass patterns served as templates for bass players in Ghanaian gospel praise songs before Sammy Otoo’s innovative bass patterns. It is also worth noting that in the late 1990s, Zapp Mallet, a veteran Ghanaian bass player and music producer, attempted to synthesise the above bass templates in the praise medley album “God is so Good” by Elder Francis Adjei. However, the most successful is Sammy Otoo’s bass recording on Soul Winners Appraise Volume I and II albums.

4.4 Sammy Otoo’s Concept and Approach to Bass Playing in Ghanaian Gospel Praise Songs

Sammy Otoo conceptualises his bass guitar patterns in the context of traditional African drum music, where low-pitched instruments are used for soloing and improvisations. By listening to diverse music genres, he builds up an extensive repertoire of bass patterns. He then adopts and adapts bass patterns from his extensive bass repertoire to create variants with the song melody in mind. He also explores bass motifs from Ghanaian highlife music. This is evident in his recordings such as “Nea Yesu Aye’ma Me”, “Ayeyi Wura”, and “Heowe”, as illustrated in Figures 3, 4 and 5 below.



Fig. 3: Variants of Bass Patterns (Nea Yesu Aye’ma Me)



Fig. 4: Variants of Bass Pattern (Ayeyi Wura)



Fig. 5: Variants of Bass Pattern (Heawe Kane)

As illustrated in the figures above, Sammy Otoo adopted and modified existing bass patterns. For instance, he confirmed incorporating and improvising bass patterns from “Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes” by Paul Simon, “God Gives His Children a Song” by Alvin Slaughter, and “Naomi” by George Darko, as shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5, respectively. Furthermore, Sammy Otoo has a strong sense of rhythm that is independent of any instrument when recording or performing. Typically, bass players rely on the drums to provide the pulse and necessary groove for a performance. Interestingly, he finds a way to drive the song so that, without the other instruments, the bass guitar alone makes his listeners dance. His rhythmic patterns, pitch organisation, and the use of bass popping, a technique in funk bass, make his bass patterns sound percussive, thereby heightening the song’s groove. It is worth noting that Sammy does not often emphasise the root note of the chords in his pitch organisation because of his artistic blend of the walking and substitution bass patterns. His pitch organisation is usually characterised by arpeggios (broken chords), scaly passages, chromaticism, and octave pairs. These characters, however, influence his pacing of notes and melody contour, making his bass patterns unpredictable in Ghanaian gospel praise songs, as illustrated in Figure 6 below.



Fig. 6: Sammy's Pitch Organisation

As illustrated in Figure 6 above, the octave pairs are highlighted in red, the broken chords in yellow, while the scaly passage and chromaticism are in violet.

It is instructive to note that a review of bass guitar patterns in Ghanaian gospel praise songs by modern Ghanaian bass players revealed Sammy Otoo’s influence. His concept of pitch organisation and bass-playing technique has become the guiding principle for modern Ghanaian bass players. Modern Ghanaian bass players such as Philip Acquah, Affreh Junior, Opoku Sanaa, Bright Osei, Samuel Okyere Darko, Emmanuel Ofori, Joe Wilson, Ransford Zico Nelson, among others, exemplify Sammy Otoo’s iconic status in Ghanaian gospel praise songs’ bass patterns. For instance, Figure 7 below shows a Facebook chat between Ransford Zico Nelson, a modern Ghanaian bass player, and his admirer, Martin Milakim Bandim, concerning a bass cover Ransford posted on his Facebook wall on August 12, 2025. In their chat, Martin observed Sammy Otoo’s influence on Ransford’s bass patterns, to which Ransford concurred.



Fig. 7: Facebook chat between Martin and Ransford

5. Implications for Practice

The work and influence of Sammy Otoo on bass guitar patterns in Ghanaian gospel praise songs hold significant implications for music instruction, particularly in African popular music pedagogy. His creative use of bass lines, fusing elements of traditional rhythms with modern gospel harmonies, strongly exemplifies how local musical traditions can be integrated into structured music instructional activities. His work emphasises the role of cultural background in musical development, prompting educators to move beyond teaching technical skills, also to include the cultural and historical context of music. This leads to a more comprehensive approach to learning music, one that acknowledges and celebrates individual differences, creative abilities, and diversity in socio-cultural musical identities. In addition, Sammy's transformed bass techniques challenge the dominance of Western music traditions, such as classical and jazz, often found in formal education. Bringing his methods into the classroom enables music teachers to introduce a broader range of musical styles, helping students develop skills in grooving, improvisation, and genre flexibility. This inclusive strategy not only enhances students' musical abilities but also affirms the value of indigenous music traditions in academic spaces, thereby narrowing the divide between institutional music training and the rich musical practices that thrive in local communities and religious gatherings. Moreover, Sammy's legacy illustrates the significance of personal creativity in shaping and evolving musical genres, portraying the musician as both a creator and a performer. This highlights the need for educators to encourage individuality and innovation in their students. Using Sammy's approach as a learning model can lead to engaging classroom activities, such as transcription projects, ensemble work, and genre-specific arrangements rooted in Ghanaian gospel music. Incorporating these elements into music education can deepen students' understanding of African musical contributions while promoting respect for their cultural values.

6. Conclusion

Over the years, bass guitar patterns in Ghanaian gospel praise songs have played a supporting role, with relatively simple rhythms, as exemplified in the works of Kofi Abraham, Elder Mireku, and Elder Francis Adjei, among others. Their phrases are mostly ostinatos, with the bass lines focusing on the root notes of their chord progressions. Sammy Otoo has recorded over five albums with his band, "Soul Winners," throughout his career as a bandleader, writer, and producer. Sammy Otoo's expressiveness and eclectic mix of bass patterns in popular musical styles have redefined the role of the electric bass in Ghanaian gospel praise songs. As a pacesetter in the twenty-first century, he has redefined the bass guitar's role as a lead voice while serving as a supporting role in Ghanaian gospel praise songs. Many Ghanaian and worldwide musicians have come to admire and emulate his approach to bass playing in Ghanaian gospel praise songs. As a result, modern Ghanaian artistes and bands use his albums as a reference point for recording their gospel praise songs.

7. Recommendation

Given the transformative influence of Sammy Otoo on the role of bass guitar in Ghanaian gospel praise songs, it is strongly recommended that music instructors, curriculum developers, and performers integrate his techniques and recordings into instructional and performance practices. Sammy Otoo's innovative use of the bass as both a

melodic and rhythmic force has redefined its role within the genre, unlike the conventional approach, characterised by simple, root-based ostinato patterns, as seen in the works of pioneers like Kofi Abraham, Elder Mireku, and Elder Francis Adjei. His work with the “Soul Winners” and his pioneering style mark a significant revolution and evolution in Ghanaian gospel music. Also, incorporating Otoo’s expressive and stylistically diverse bass techniques into music instruction would provide students with a richer understanding of contemporary African music performance practices. His fusion of traditional and modern elements offers an excellent model for creative bass-playing and genre innovation. Aspiring musicians can benefit from studying his albums, which now serve as benchmarks for gospel praise recordings in Ghana and beyond. Finally, institutions and individuals involved in African popular music education and performance should formally recognise and adopt Sammy Otoo’s contributions as an essential learning material. His work not only reflects the dynamic evolution of Ghanaian popular/gospel music but also provides a globally relevant case study on how instrumental roles can be reimagined to inspire future generations of musicians.

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