

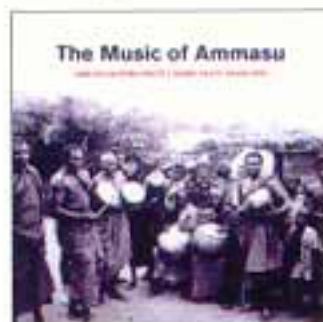
The Music of Ammasu

Country & Eastern CE07

Full Price (76 mins)

★★★★

Audio vérité from a Ghanaian village



This is a superbly packaged musical portrait of the village of Ammasu in the Brong-Ahafa region of Ghana, though it is probably of

interest primarily to anthropologists, ethnomusicologists or drum students. It was recorded in 1976 by Bengt Berger, a Scandinavian who took his family off to live and study in the village for one-and-a-half years. Clearly a labour of love, the CD and accompanying booklet is pretty much a diary of Berger's discovery of the different types of music played in the village and their relative social functions.

The Ammasu Akapoma Group is a funeral band and many of the musical extracts are ritualistic drum passages, vocal funeral dirges and laments. In addition there are some examples of children's play songs, love songs, and even a splendidly rousing ten minutes of brass band music from a

Africa

visiting ensemble. Field recordings of tribal ritual music often make for a difficult listening experience – vocally discordant and rhythmically rather random-sounding. However when placed in context by the liner notes, as this recording is, rewarding and interesting music is revealed. For those who love authentic raw tribal music this is a well-recorded and scrupulously researched example. For those who crave more, the label's website offers MP3 downloads of a further three albums' worth of recordings from the same village.

Martin Sinnock