

#11

Song

This song exemplifies qualities of form, tonality, rhythm and melody that are widespread in Ewe music. Leader and group alternate complementary musical settings of basically the same text (differing only in the leader's "which bird" and the group's "some bird"); this section is repeated (A1A2 A1A2). In the new section that follows (B1) there is no call-and-response, an unusual feature that makes this song distinctive. The expected reprise of A section material uses only the group's material, an arranging decision by the composer that is not at all unusual. The melodic action is normative: leader works higher in the gamut, group provides stability and resolution. The tonality here uses minor seconds in a pentatonic scale pattern in the mode 1-2 \flat -4-5-6 \flat , transcribed as d4-e \flat 4-g4-a4-b \flat 4. In section A the phrases are relatively long, making ample use of two-note figures to move from bell stroke 2 through two bell phrases. Whereas the leader ends in rhythmic suspense on pulse 12, the group ends right on ONE. In section B the first phrases are short, moving 3-4-1 (mm.6-9). The musical setting dramatizes the text: bird references go with upward melodic contour; the song's evocation of emotion ("wo, wo, wo") imitates real lamentation. In sum, this is a typically well-designed, fully articulated Ewe song.

Drumming

The striking thing about this sogo-kidi phrase is its moment of beginning: ONE! The rhythm in four-beats 1-2 is widespread in West Africa, often appearing as a time line pattern (dah dah da-dah). The kidi player may choose either a binary or ternary approach

within beat 1 and, as is the rule, dzi strokes on sogo cue bounce strokes on kidi. Sogo's tsa strokes over four-beats 3-4 establish 3:2 in the bell's second half (onbeat six : onbeat four). GFA plays with restraint, content to let the drumming composition have its natural impact on the song; both song and drums emphasis the onbeat moments of four-beats 1 and 2. He works closely around the kidi response, interjecting periodic explosions of dense rolling phrases with intricately timed fast notes. Nothing special here--just great Ewe music.