

#7

## Song

In terms of Ewe singing this is a rather easy song to learn and understand. The leader opens at the middle of the range (c5), moves upward to settle e5, descends to d5, and then to the finalis on g4. The tune fits into anhemitonic pentatonic scale in the mode 1-2-4-5-7 $\flat$  (g4-a4-c5-d5 f5). The group also starts on c5 but stays in the middle portion of the gamut before heading to g4. What of the b $\flat$  in the group part? I hear it as a note added to the pitch set that enables the group's trichord motive b $\flat$ 4-c5-d5 (m.4) to imitate the leader's motive f5-g5-a5 (m.2). Study of the score shows that the b $\flat$  only appears at this point in the tune. Rhythmically, I hear the song's surface accentuation as a recurring alternation between the four-beat feel in the second half of the bell and the six-beat feel in the first half; this 1-2-3, 1-2 pattern is normative in the context of Ewe music.

## Drumming

Juxtaposed with this simple song, is drumming of the highest polymetric contrast and rhythmic intensity! The core of the kidi pattern is a four-pulse unit of two press strokes and two bounce strokes; this unit occurs three times over the span of one bell phrase. Clearly, this pattern accentuates the onbeat six-beat feel (6/4) that readily can be interpreted as a three-beat meter (3/2). Depending on which timbre of kidi stroke assumes precedence in the mind's ear, the "in three" time is either ONE-two-THREE-four-FIVE-six or one-TWO-three-FOUR-five-SIX. When the sogo states the drum language it flows in synchrony with the kidi phrase: in (A) sogo's de strokes match kidi's presses, ga strokes match kidi bounces; in (B) the sogo rests while kidi bounces, yielding

an interlocked 2+2 emphasis; in (C) sogo matches kidi's bounces with dzi strokes, adding ga strokes that transform the three four-pulse figures into one unified phrase over twelve pulses. In actual performance GFA unleashes his full conceptual and technical mastery of Agbadza music. The fit between tune and drumming is ingenious: the two syllable words "kale" and "dzogbe" always occur in unison with kidi bounces.