#15

Song

Features that attract my attention in this song include: asymmetry in call-and-response arrangement, new progression of tonal centers, new tonality (minor seconds between modal degrees 2-3 and 5-6), and the use of two time feels on the tune's rhythmic surface. In this song, the leader's part has shorter duration than the group part (compare to songs #10 and #14 for the reverse situation). Spread over the twenty-four pulses within two spans of the bell pattern, the durations of the phrases of leader and group may be stated arithmetically as 9+15; motives within the phrases of leader and group also have asymmetrical proportions (leader: 4+5, group: 7+8). Thus, this method of using pulses to measure the durations of the song's phrases yields the equation 24 = (4+5) + (7+8). This asymmetry exerts musical force on the other instruments in the performance, creating enjoyable and affectively powerful relationships.

The following table tracks the tune's sequence of phrase finals. Coming after a sequence of finals within the e4-a4-d5 axis, I suggest that the phrase final on b♭4 feels very unstable, thus preparing for the arrival on song's overall finalis, g4.

d5	m.1, 3.2	up	minor 2	e♭5
e♭5	m.2, 2.2	down	perfect 5	a4
a4	m.2, 4.3	down	perfect 4	e♭4
e♭4	m.3, 4.1	up	perfect 5	b♭4
b♭4	m.4, 2.2	down	minor 3	g4 (end of song)
g4	m.4, 3.3 and 4.3	up	perfect 5	d5 (start of next occurrence)

The melodic interval of minor third gives the tune its distinctive tonal flavor. The song fits into a hemitonic pentatonic scale (g4-a4-b♭4-d5-e♭5, 1-2-3♭-5-6♭) that enables minor third leaps at low, mid and upper portions of its range. When I sing this song, I have

difficulty properly intoning pitch a4 as the upper neighbor to g4, perhaps because the major second step feels odd after so many minor third leaps.

The composer dramatized the song text through a shrewd use of the linear 3:2 formula 1-2-3, 1-2, that is, the shift from six-feel to four-feel within the first cycle of the bell phrase. Accentuation in the leader's opening call flows "KLA-la ME MA-dO" (quarter-quarter-dotted quarter); the final vowel sound extends through bell stroke 6, which makes the second half of measure one feel like it is organized around two dotted quarters (four-beats 3-4). Since the other phrases in the song all fit comfortably into the onbeat six-beat feel, the leader's statement, "I will sleep in calico" seizes our attention.

Drumming

The composer of drum language composition has designed a phrase that invites the creative listener to hear it in many different metric and rhythmic configurations at the same time. Rhythmic multideterminancy, in other words, is at the heart of this composition's musical power. The drum language is set on the first five pulses within the bell phrase. An Ewe speaker enculturated to music like Agbadza mostly likely will feel the accentuation on the first partial of four-beats 1 and 2, "**Zɔ** mi-yi/a-***f*ɛ**-gbɔ" (counting eighth note pulses 1-2-3, 1-2). As we have observed in our discussion of melodic rhythm, however, a string of equidurational notes establishes the musical conditions for a variety of rhythmic effects. Let's tease them out by indulging in some fine-grained analysis..

Kidi has bounce strokes on pulses 2, 4, 5 (1.2, 3.1-2); crucially, the first bounce enters just after ONE! In terms of the four feel, the first bounce may be regarded as a

pickup that leads towards beat 2, although its long duration is unusual for that function; the onbeat bounce confers accentuation to beat 2. Because the drumming de-emphasizes the power of pulse 1 and beat 1, this is syncopation Ewe style. Further, the location of first and third bounce strokes on second partials (1.2, 2.2) accentuates a displaced position of the four-feel beats, inviting us to hear the four feel in a shifted position. These offbeat forces are moderated, however, by the drum language that begins directly on ONE, albeit with a press stroke that is not as loud as the subsequent bounce.

Two more sources of rhythmic power are in play. If the listener's gestalt aligns to the six feel, which is being constantly articulated by the handclap part, then kidi is heard to give prominence to the upbeats of six-feel beats 1 and 2. The three kidi bounces also establish an extremely intense interlocking relationship to bell strokes 1-4. As this analysis shows, in the context of the musical forces that are ingrained within Agbadza, a short little pattern of strokes can release enormous rhythmic energy.

Sogo puts all this into an even richer musical environment. Unlike kidi, the sogo flows with the onbeat six feel: loud tones are forcefully articulated on six-beats 1-2, followed by quieter tsa strokes on six-beats 4-5-6. Sogo and kidi are intensely interlocked, as easily seen in the graphic representation of timbre in staff notation: kidi's presses (x-shaped note heads) match sogo's bounces (blackened ovals), while sogo's dzi strokes cue kidi's bounces. Drum language B requires the sogo player to leave the normal pattern of 3:2 over the second half of the bell phrase (quarters:dotted quarters) and "go binary" within four-beat 4, that is, play four fast strokes within the span of its three pulses. In the recorded performance, we hear GFA using a variety of figures within four-beats 3-4 that anticipate and culminate in the kidi response.

When the song and the drumming meet, the musical power of #15 really takes off. Rather than doing more close analysis, I will simply call the reader's attention to one facet of the song-drum interaction: the song is relatively inactive during four-beats 4-1, which is just the portion bell phrase in which the drums are most active. Musical intelligence is on display in this finely designed arrangement.