

#9

Song

Although the form of this song is simple--alternation of the same text by leader and group--the tune is very active and the tonal materials are rich. The text setting gives prominence to "gadzedzo" (war emergency), a key image in the poem. The leader opens with consecutive ascending conjunct leaps (d4-g-c5) and step-wise motion within the b4-d5 trichord, coming to rest on the b4. In this collection, tonal stasis on the minor third (assuming g4 as 1) is a very distinctive. The leader's second phrase begins on the upper octave (g5) and then works within the mid-gamut trichord, coming to rest on c5. The third leader phrase prolongs the mid-range melody until its end in measure 5, when it finally zeroes in on g4, approached from above a4-g4. I hear the tonality as centered on g4 in a mode of the anhemitonic pentatonic scale not yet heard on the recording--1-3-4-5-7b (g4-b4-c5-d5-f5)--with a4 added as an upper neighbor to g4. The group's response is limited to the lower end of the gamut: its opening two phrases work around c5-b4 and back to g4; its last phrase functions like an extended cadence to g4 approached first from above (a4) and then with more finality from below (d4-f4-g4). The group's final phrase suggests another pitch set for the same mode encountered in the leader's part (d4-f4-g4-a4-c5) but the importance of b4 throughout most of the song moderates the likelihood that this modulation will ever be more than subtle shading to the overall tonality of the song.

Drumming

Important musical patterns in Agbadza are clearly illustrated in the sogo-kidi part. Sogo's call covers two four-feel beats: beat 2 receives ternary interpretation and beat 3 gets binary interpretation, yet since sogo's three ga strokes in beat 2 conjoin with the ga stroke on beat 3 to make a set of four consecutive strokes of the same timbre, we hear the final dzi stroke as a solitary element in the whole phrase, that is, ga ga ga ga + dzi. Kidi responds on cue to the sogo's dzi but anticipates it with a quick pickup that implies 3:2 inside four-beat 3 (three eighths : two dotted eighths). Kidi's second partial accentuation (3.2, 1.2) is widespread in many genres of Ewe music and occurs in other Agbadza drumming compositions. The sogo-kidi interchange occurs within four-beats 2-3 and 4-1, mitigating the sense of rhythmic closure inherent to ONE. Like #8, I hear the drumming and singing as two trains running on parallel tracks with regard to their intimate musical interchange. GFA certainly is listening to the song, however, as heard in the way he designs placement of the rolling passages.