

#3

## Song

In its broad patterns this tune is quite uniform: the call-and-response is simple alternation (L-G-L-G), the phrases all are one bell phrase in duration, the text repeats almost exactly with only slight addition in the second leader's phrase, the tonality is straight forwardly anhemitonic pentatonic (1-2-3-5-6, g4-a4-b4-d5-e5), the melody builds on the affinity between D-G and unambiguously affirms g4 as its tonal center, and the tune's melodic motion is always descending.

So how did the composer make the song musically interesting? With rhythm. The melodic phrases begin on four-beat 3 and move over the bar line towards conclusion within four-beats 1 and/or 2; in other words, they push against the bell's inherent 3-4-1 cadence to ONE. Both leader and group move over the second half of the bell phrase "in six," which puts them in 3:2 ratio with the four-beats 3 and 4. The group's tune always accentuates four-beats 1 and 2, which puts it in 2:3 ratio with the three-then-two linear cross rhythm in the metric matrix. The most sophisticated rhythmic action is in the leader's part. In the first phrase, the placement of notes on pulses 12 (m.1) and 2 (m.2) create a shift in the rhythmic flow from onbeat to upbeat six; alternatively, if the listener's mental orientation stays "in four," the notes on g5 and e5 mark for emphasis the third partials in four-beats 3 and 4, while the d4 within four-beat 1 (m.2) falls on pulse 2, a position between bell strokes that is the structurally weakest moment in the measure. Put differently, the leader syncopates the last word in the phrase ("kue"), dragging it off pulse 1 to a delayed position on pulse 2. In the leader's second phrase, the added text enables the tune to continue on the upbeat six flow that had been hinted at in the leader's first

phrase (see notes on pulses 12-2-4); or, if listeners stay "in four," they can register consecutive second partial accents within beats 3-4-1-2 (e5-d-d5-g4) that suggest displacement of the normal position of the four-feel beats. These subtle rhythmic possibilities in the leader's part are countered and resolved by the group's steady accentuation of the onbeat moments within four-beats 1 and 2.

## Drumming

Drum composition #3 is grounded in a figure with simple morphology--two bounces followed by four presses--but after this idea is stated three times, a set of six presses creates an unexpected feeling of inactivity, of space, of void. Over the span of two bell phrases, in other words, the kidi puts bounces on the second and third partials of four-beats 4, 2, and 4. This is a deeply familiar rhythmic design in Ewe music, found also in the kaganu part for the Drum called Kpegisu, for example. Their polyrhythm with strokes in the bell phrase colors the kidi's bounce strokes: inside four-beat 4, the second bounce of kidi acquires extra power by being in synch with bell stroke 7; within four-beat 2, bell strokes 3-4 energize both kidi strokes. The way kidi nicely weaves in and around the song is another important dimension of its phrase; within four-beat 4 in measures 1-3 both kidi bounces match exactly with the song leader's "dada," whereas at other times the song and kidi either do not coincide at all or match up on kidi's first bounce.

As we hear consistently throughout the recorded performance, sogo uses dzi strokes to cue the location of kidi bounces but in #3 something unusual happens: sogo must add a ga stroke after the kidi bounces to complete the drum language. This ga stroke occurs on the second partial of four-beats 1 and 3 (1.2, 3.2), which reinforces the

"second partial" flavor of the song. Demonstrating tasteful restraint, GFA plays very spare passages that repeatedly mark second partial moments. He contrasts this sensation of musical spaciousness by playing extended, dense rolling passages (see mm. 47-50). When he comes out of the rolling phrases, GFA carefully aligns the statement of the drum language with the song leader's call.