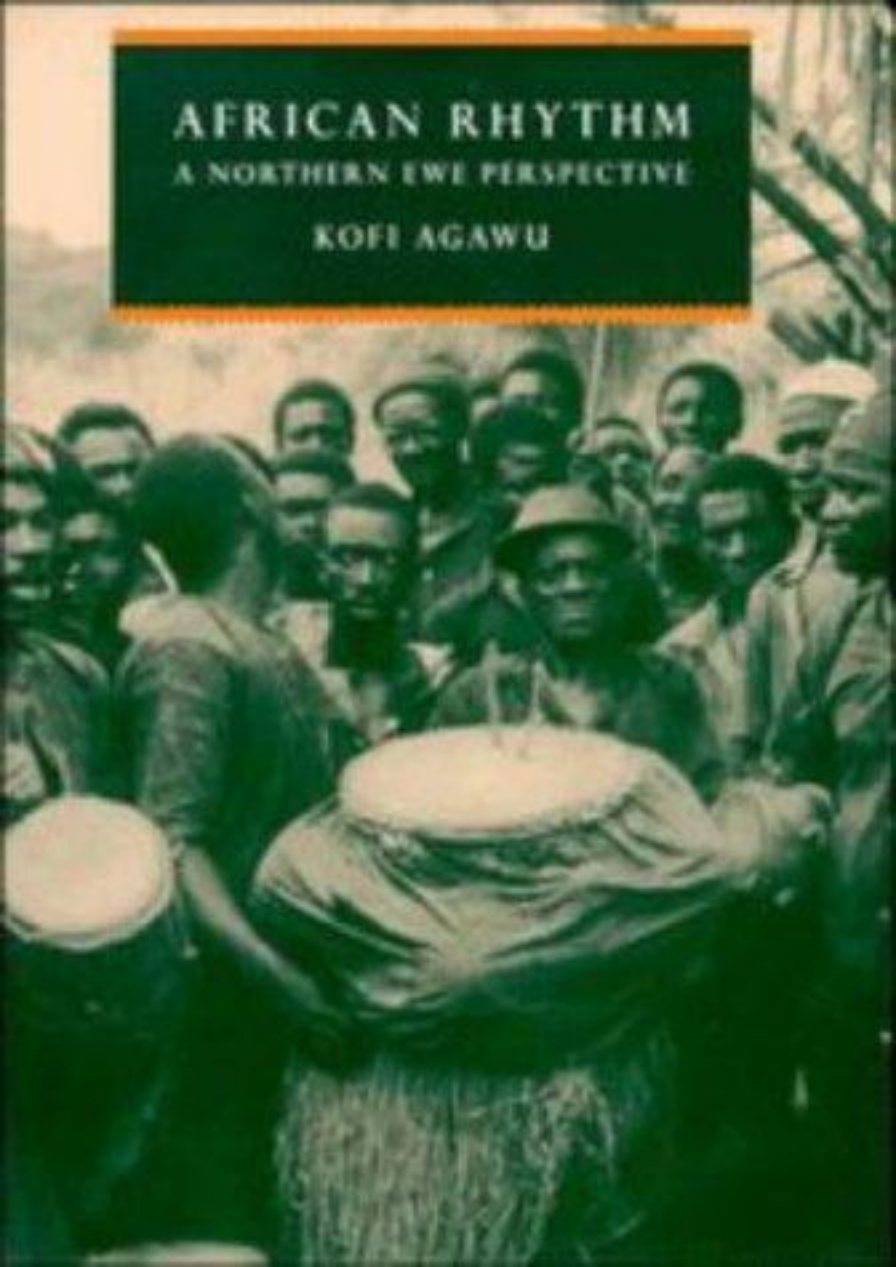
AFRICAN RHYTHM

A NORTHERN EWE PERSPECTIVE

KOFI AGAWU



It is often said that the distinctive quality of African music lies in its rhythmic structure. Scholarly work on this music has accordingly stressed drumming as the site at which "complex" rhythms are cultivated. In this book, Kofi Agawu argues that drumming is only one among several modes of rhythmic expression and that a more fruitful approach to the understanding of African music is through spoken language, in particular its tonal and rhythmic contours, and its metalinguistic function. Drawing on his research among the Northern Ewe people of Ghana, Professor Agawu constructs a soundscape of Northern Eweland which demonstrates the pervasiveness of a variety of forms of rhythmic expression in the daily lives of the people. He then devotes a chapter each to an analysis of rhythm in language, song, drumming and dancing, musical performance, and folktale narration. A concluding chapter addresses some of the ideological factors that have influenced the representation of African rhythm.

An accompanying compact disk enables the reader to work closely with the sound of African speech and song discussed in the book.

AFRICAN RHYTHM

AFRICAN RHYTHM

A Northern Ewe perspective

KOFI AGAWU

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011–4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

First published 1995

Printed in Great Britain at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data

Agawu. V. Kofi (Victor Kofi)
African rhythm: a Northern Ewe perspective / Kofi Agawu.
p. cm.
ISBN 0 521 148084 1 (hardback)
1. Ewe (African people) – Music – History and criticism.
2. Folk music – Ghana – Volta Region.
3. Folk songs, Ewe – Ghana – Volta Region.
4. Musical meter and rhythm. I. Title.
ML3760.7.G4A3 1995
781.62' 96337401224 – dc20 94–31648 CIP MN

ISBN 0 521 48084 1 hardback

SN

For Atu, Senyo and Emefa

Contents

Illustrations

between pages 108 and 109

Music examples

CD track		
1	Example 1.3	Carpenters' rhythm (played on bells and drums), Cape-Coast
2	Example 1.1	Church of the Living God, Akpafu-Mempeasem
3	Example 1.8	Farm song (*Agbleha*), Akpafu-Todzi
4	Example 2.2	Town crier's announcement, Akpafu-Todzi
5	Example 2.4	Opening prayer, Akpafu-Ɔdɔmi
6	Example 2.5	Closing prayer, Akpafu-Ɔdɔmi
7	Example 3.3	Play song, Pekí-Blengo
8	Example 3.5	Children's clapping game song, Zìaví
9	Example 3.6	Children's clapping game song, Pekí-Blengo
10	Example 3.7	Children's stone-lifting song, Akpafu-Todzi
11	Example 3.8	Children's stone-lifting song, Akpafu-Todzi
12	Example 3.9	Cloth-exchanging play song, Akpafu-Todzi
13	Example 3.10	Pelvic thrust play song, Pekí-Blengo
14	Example 3.11	Àdjèí Kɔmi's improvised song, Mátse
15	Example 3.12	Àdjèí Kɔmi's improvised song, Mátse
16	Example 3.13	Akpafu funeral dirge, Akpafu-Aɖɔkɔ
17	Example 3.14	Song introducing *Gbòlò* dance, Pekí-Tsame
18	Example 3.15	Ewe funeral dirge, Ho-Bankoe
19	Example 3.17	Ewe funeral dirge, Pekí-Blengo
20	Example 4.3	Fragment of *Bɔbɔbɔ* music, Kpándŏ
21	Example 4.6	Talking drum signal, Akpafu-Aɖɔkɔ
22		Folktale performance (includes Examples 6.1–6.6), Pekí-Blengo
23		Fragment of talking drumming, Akpafu-Aɖɔkɔ*
24		Choral singing by the Celestial Joy Singers, Kpándŏ*

Note: An asterisk (*) denotes additional items from the Northern Ewe repertoire not transcribed or discussed directly in the book.

Acknowledgments

The genre of "acknowledgments" was not made for native scholars. For what most people will expect to read here is a list of institutions and organizations that paid for my research, another of individuals or informants who offered various kinds of help and information during fieldwork, and a third of scholars who commented upon this work at various stages during its gestation. All three lists should always be read critically, of course, but I am concerned here with the constraints imposed by the first two. My concern arises partly because my understanding of the material presented in this book owes far more to what I learned growing up in Northern Eweland than to periods of official field research. I say this not to undercut the acknowledgments which I am about to make, nor to seem ungrateful for grants without which I simply could not have undertaken this project, but to point to biases in conventions of scholarly discourse, conventions that encourage us to privilege fieldwork paid for by others and knowledge acquired during relatively short periods of intentional search for knowledge over knowledge and experience gained as part of an informal and extended musical education.

That said, I should get on with the ritual. I am grateful to Earthwatch for money and nineteen eager volunteers who assisted me in 1986. I owe the photographs reproduced here to Jim Barnum, Ed Dixon, Stephanie Panos and Alice Roth. Thanks are due to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for funds to travel to Ghana in 1989. A Guggenheim Fellowship in 1990–91 freed up time for me to begin drafting the book. I thank the Foundation for its assistance, and apologize for taking so long to complete the project. It was during my year as Faculty Fellow at the Society for Humanities at Cornell University (1993–94) that I managed to finish the book. I am sure that this is not the first time that one of the Society's scholars has apologized for spending time on a project other than the one for which s/he was offered a fellowship.

Working in Ghana inevitably requires a large number of contacts, support schemes, obligations, and dependencies. There are chiefs and elders of various towns and villages from whom permission to study their culture (what the Northern Ewe call *Ɖekɔnúwó*) must be sought. There are various group leaders to whom applications must be made for demonstrations or actual performances. There is an intricate network of people who run errands, supply palm wine, gin, Schnapps, goats, chickens and grasscutters, and answer questions enthusiastically (though not always accurately). Which of these scores of people should be mentioned, and which not?

I have kept my list to a minimum not out of a desire to make heroes of a few individuals but because the longer the list the more grievous would be sins of omission. I would like to acknowledge three individuals, intellectuals in their own right, who arranged performances of dance and music in the Akpafu, Pekí, and Ho areas. Mr. Solomon Danquah, (then) of Akpafu-Todzi, arranged visits to Akpafu-Mempeasem, Akpafu-Todzi, Akpafu-Ɔɖɔmi, and Akpafu-Aɖɔkɔ. Mr. W. I. C. Dowoeh arranged visits to Pekí-Blengo, Pekí-Tsame, Pekí-Dzake and Pekí-Àvètilé. And Mr. Obed Vigour Kissiedu took charge of visits to Ho, Mátse, Zìaví, Klefé, and Àvènúi. None of these visits would have been possible without the cooperation of the chiefs, elders and citizens of each of these towns. It is to them that I enter my deepest gratitude for letting me disrupt their normal routines.

Two performing groups in particular gave more of their time than I had requested: Miwɔe Nényó Hábɔbɔ̌of Pekí-Blengo led by Mr. Dowoeh and the Zìaví Zígí Group led by Messrs. W. K. Dàkè and E. N. K. Àkórlí. Thanks are also due to the Totoeme Group at Pekí-Tsame, the Dzòvú groups throughout the Pekí traditional area, a group of Àdzòxédziláwó from Pekí-Àvètíle, the Y.M.C.A. Cultural Group at Ho, Dùmèdèfɔ̀ (choir of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church), and the Celestial Joy Singers of Kpándo. In other practical ways, I am indebted to Dr. Eric Akrofi, Mrs. Judith Osai, and Mr. Seth Addo.

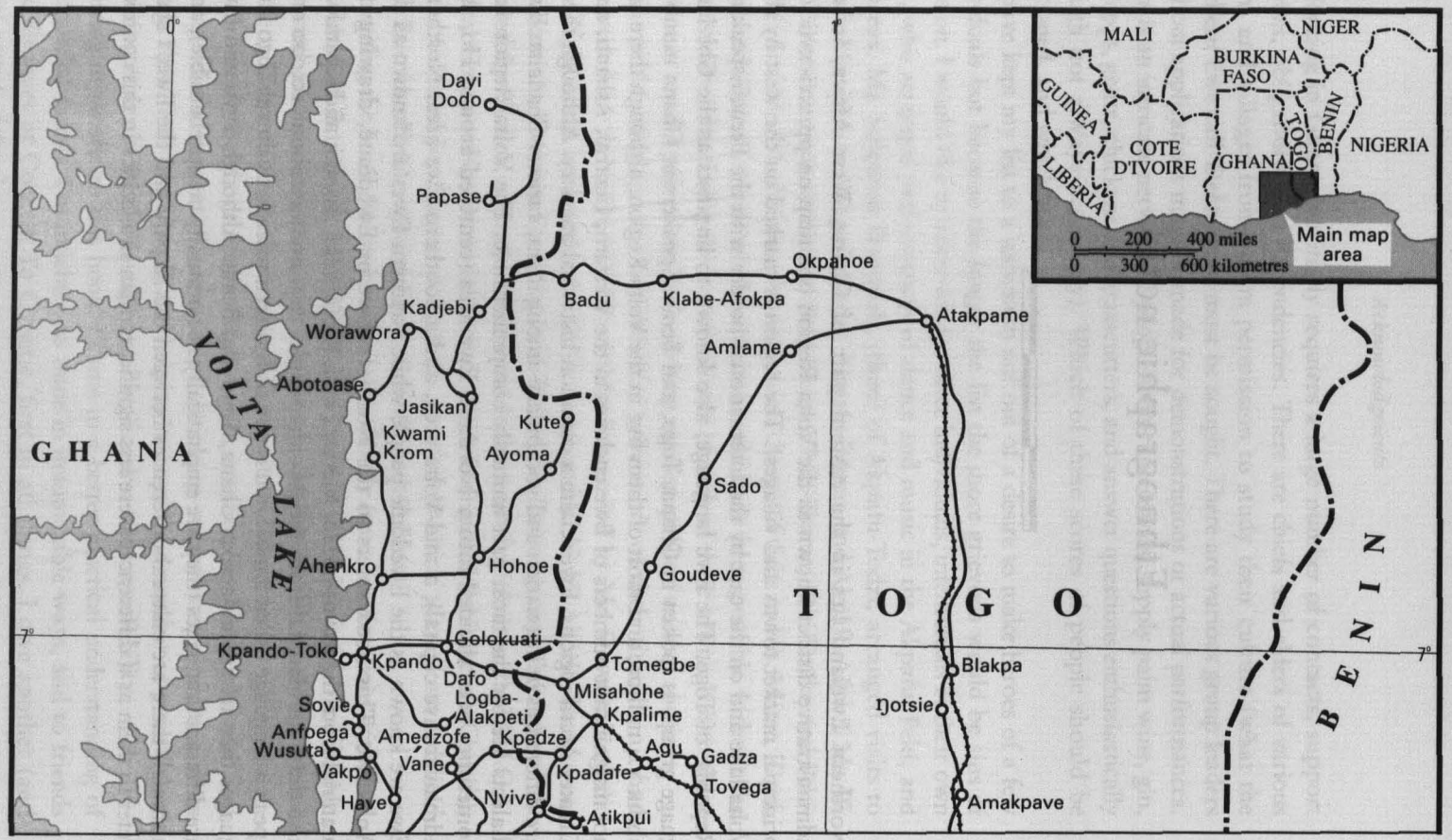
In writing the book, I have benefited enormously from conversations with Paul Richards, Kofi Anyidoho, Martin F. Hatch Jnr., and Obed Kissiedu. Mr. Kissiedu supported this project from the beginning, taught me many things about Northern Ewe culture, and encouraged me not to cut corners – which unfortunately I've done. My greatest debt, however, is to Stephen Blum, who read and commented on the entire manuscript, bringing to my attention numerous writings that I had overlooked, and helping to improve a number of points. Any remaining errors of fact and judgment are of course my responsibility.

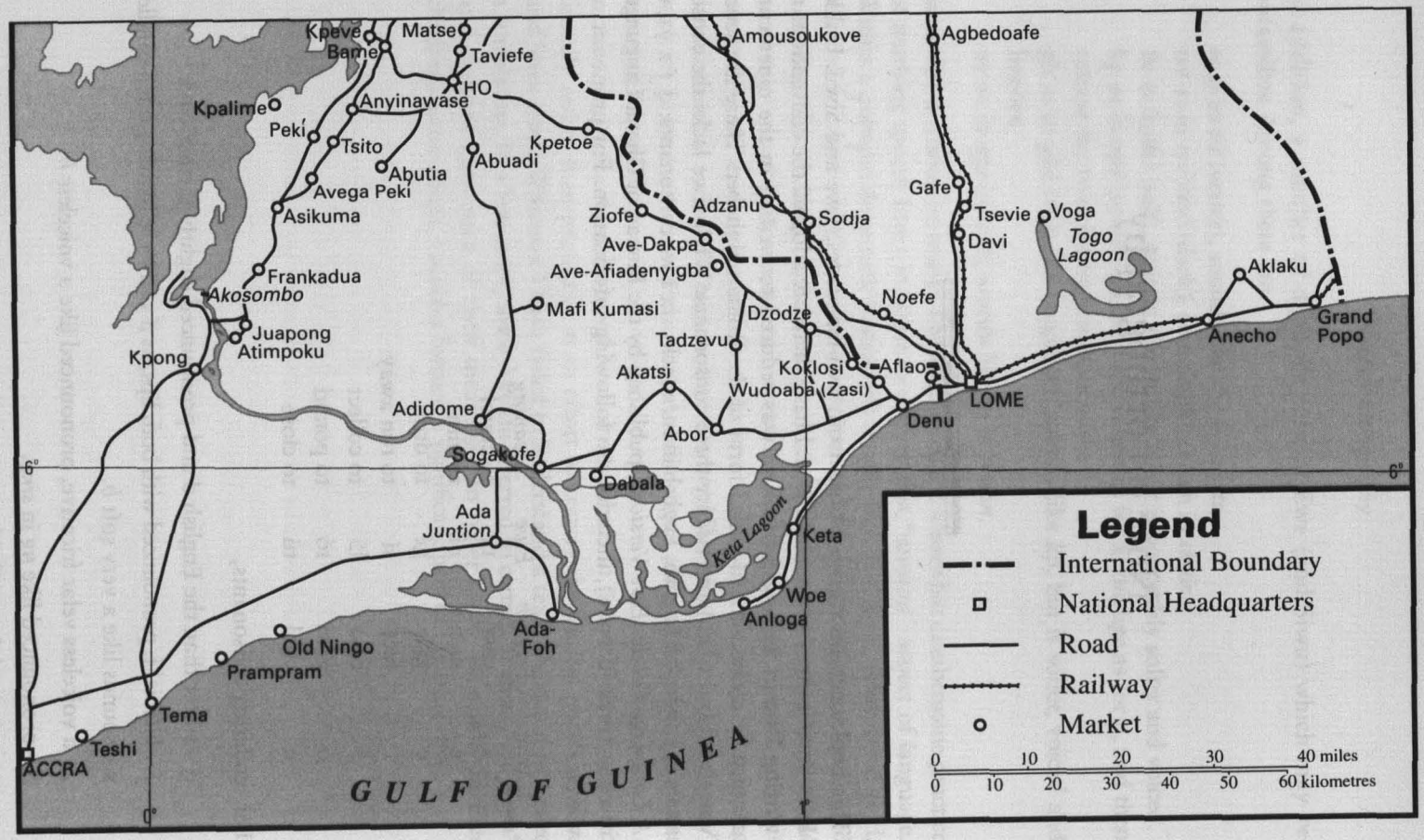
During my work on this book, I came to a better practical understanding of the extended family. I'm indebted to mine in innumerable ways, and to friends and colleagues at Cornell. To Christie, first in all things, I owe another (and bigger) round of thanks.

Ithaca, New York
June 1994

Ethnographic note

Northern Eweland lies in the eastern part of Ghana, West Africa, in an administrative district known as the Volta Region (see map on pp. xvi–xvii for principal market towns and villages). The region is marked on the west by the Volta lake and on the east by the international border with the French-speaking Republic of Togo. The Ewe language, also known to linguists as the Gbè language group, is spoken in Ghana, Togo, and Benin. Speakers in Ghana number about 1.4 million, and most of them live in the Volta Region, although there are not insignificant numbers of Ewe enclaves in the Western, Central, Ashanti, and Greater-Accra regions. Ewes claim a common historical ancestry. Although there are differences in intonation and vocabulary among them, various Ghanaian Ewe dialects are for the most part mutually comprehensible. The Volta Region has sometimes been divided into a Northern Ewe area (centered around Ho, the administrative capital), a mid-Volta area, and a Southern Ewe area. Northern Ewe are known as the Èwèdòmè people while Southern Ewes are known as the Anlɔ-Ewe. This book refers to the Northern Ewe or Èwèdòmè, drawing on material from the towns of Ho, Mátse, Zìaví, Klefé, Pekí, Àvènúi, and Kpándǒ. I also draw on material from the Akpafu people, who number about 10,000 and speak a language called *Siwu*. Siwu is one of fourteen so-called Central-Togo languages that are spread across Ghana, Togo and Benin. Although Siwu and Ewe are different languages (they are emphatically not mutually comprehensible), and although there are cultural differences between the Akpafu and the Ewe, I shall refer to them as if differences were less significant than similarities in this context.


0°
1°
7°
7°
GHANA
VOLTA LAKE
T O G O
BENIN
Dayi
Dodo
Papase
Kadjebi
Worawora
Abotoase
Jasikan
Kwami
Krom
Kute
Ayoma
Ahenkro
Hohoe
Okpahoe
Badu
Klabe-Afokpa
Atakpame
Amlame
Sado
Goudeve
Kpando-Toko
Kpando
Golokuati
Dafo
Logba-
Alakpeti
Tomegbe
Misahohe
Kpalime
Blakpa
Ŋotsie
Sovie
Anfoega
Wusuta
Vakpo
Amedzofe
Vane
Kpedze
Agu
Gadza
Kpadafe
Tovega
Have
Nyive
Atikpui
Amakpave
MALI
NIGER
BURKINA
FASO
GUINEA
LIBERIA
COTE
D'IVOIRE
GHANA
TOGO
BENIN
NIGERIA
0 200 400 miles
0 300 600 kilometres
Main map
area



Northern Eweland. Source: *Asigbe Xletigbale* (market day calendar) by N. K. Dzobo.

Note on orthography

This book contains transcriptions from two languages, Ewe and Siwu. Unlike Ewe, Siwu is not a written language. I have therefore adopted the conventions of writing Ewe in writing Siwu. Ewe was reduced to writing in the nineteenth century by means of a modified form of the Roman alphabet. There are seven vowels (a ɛ e i o ɔ u) and twenty-three consonants. While Ewe lacks the consonants c, j and q of English, English in turn lacks six Ewe consonants: ɖ ƒ x ɣ ŋ ʋ. A *Language Guide (Ewe Version)*, published by the Bureau of Ghana Languages in 1961 (revised 1986), includes the following information. For pronouncing vowels,

Vowel	*English*	*Ewe*	*Meaning*
a	cast	tá	to crawl
ɛ	men	nɛ̂	to him
e	gale	gé	to drop
i	feet	sí	to run away
ɔ	cost	lɔ́	to collect
o	goal	tó	to pound
u	cool	tú	to close

For rendering consonants,

ɖ – softer than the English d and pronounced slightly further back.

ƒ – bilabial f, pronounced with both lips, as if you were blowing out a candle.

x – sounds like a very soft *h*.

ɣ – a voiceless velar fricative, pronounced like a voiceless *h*.

ŋ – pronounced like *ng* in *sing*.

ʋ – a voiced *f*, sounds like an English *v* pronounced with both lips.

In addition, a number of digraphs exist in Ewe (and Siwu) which may be unfamiliar. Among them are

ts as in *tsi* (water), sounds like the ts in *hits*.
tsy as in *tsyɔtsyɔ́* (dark), sounds like the ch in *chair*.
dz as in *dzè* (salt), sounds almost like *ts* but is noticeably softer and voiced.
kp as in *kpé* (stone): position the velum as for *k*, the lips as for *p*, and then release the two closing simultaneously.
gb as in *gbè* (voice or language), sounds like *kp*, but is softer, voiced and heavier.
ny as in *nya* (word), sounds like ni in *onion*.

Since this is a book on music, I have adopted the somewhat cumbersome practice of marking speech tones in order to convey this "musical" aspect of language. Within a nominal three-tone framework (High, Mid, and Low, abbreviated as H, M, and L respectively), low tones are marked by an *accent grave* (as in *dzò* meaning "fire") while high tones are marked by an *accent aigu* (as in *súkpá* meaning "stupid"). A change of tone within the duration of a single vowel is marked by an *accent circonflexe* or its inversion. Thus the word nê meaning "to him/her" is so written because its tones are HM while the word for "goat," with its LH pattern, is written as gbɔ̌. Mid tones are unmarked (as in *tɔnye* meaning "mine").

All translations from Ewe and Siwu are my own. In general I have translated literally rather than poetically in an effort to convey the natural poetry of Ewe and Siwu texts. Wherever I have failed to understand a text, I have not provided a translation. In a few cases, some Akpafu referred to certain texts as "old Siwu" and claimed ignorance of their meanings. In other cases, especially in Ewe children's game songs, vocables formed a significant part of the sung text.

Note on transcription

Northern Ewe music is transcribed in this book using staff notation, or a modified version thereof, in order to render the material immediately comprehensible. Most of the items transcribed may be heard on the accompanying compact disk. The following points should be borne in mind in reading the scores:

1. Examples on two or three levels, represented as two or three parallel horizontal lines respectively, are designed to reflect the intonational patterns of spoken language (a High–Low or a High–Mid–Low grid is used). Each example should be read as a single, compound structure, not as a summation of two or three different lines. Simply follow the succession of notes from left to right, making the appropriate tonal changes. None of the individual lines has meaning apart from the others.
2. Because of the high incidence of quavers in the Northern Ewe song repertoire, and because most songs are syllabic rather than melismatic, I have not followed the standard convention of representing each sung syllable by an unattached note. Rather, I have grouped notes in accordance with the prevailing meter. This makes it easier to observe characteristic patterns and to note relationships between vocal and instrumental repertoires.
3. Melodic variants, consisting usually of a single alternative, are written one on top of the other. For example, a cadential approach to a final A may be sung as C–B–A or as C–G–A. The notes B and G are considered alternatives and so are represented as a simultaneity.

Prologue

This is a book about rhythm in African music. It does not deal with the whole of Africa – an impossible undertaking in any event – but with a tiny portion of it, the Northern Ewe culture area in the Volta Region of Ghana, West Africa.[1] This narrowing of focus, this deliberate setting of limits, is forced upon us not only by our increasingly specialized professional situations but by a keener appreciation of the diverse and complex nature of African music(s). Generalizations about "African music" in the literature of the 1950s seem to have given way to less assailable regional characterizations such as *Musique Dan*, *Venda Children's Songs*, "Bushman Counterpoint" and *Drum Gahu*. And even where "Africa" is incorporated into a title, as in John Miller Chernoff's remarkable *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, the emphasis is invariably on one or two ethnic groups: in Chernoff's case, the Dagomba and Southern Ewe of Ghana.

But although we have become better at setting limits, we have not succeeded in eliminating direct or indirect references to other parts of Africa from our most carefully framed projects. I would suspect, for example, that the majority of readers of a book like this will have read about, played, or listened to African (or Ghanaian, or Ewe) music, and will necessarily bring to this reading a set of presuppositions. Moreover, the technical vocabulary with which we analyze African music ("Call-and-Response," "polyrhythm," "multi-part singing," and so on) resonates strongly with other musics and music theories. So, while some of us may choose not to confront the network of associations generated by our methods and vocabulary, preferring to let them remain implicit, none of us can deny the fact of their existence.[2] My approach here is, I fear, one of compromise: while sticking firmly to the Northern Ewe, about whose music my ignorance is less complete, I do not always resist the urge to mention or discuss certain popular characterizations of African music ("it is all based on drumming"; "its melodies are short and undeveloped"; "it is rhythmically complex"; "its makers

are naturally musical"; and so on). The evidence drawn from the Northern Ewe sometimes reinforces, sometimes undermines, these characterizations. And this is as it should be, for the web of knowledge about African music is diffuse, intricate, and subject to constant revision.

For many people, "African rhythm" still means "African drumming." Yet only one of the book's chapters (Chapter 4) deals with drumming; all the others are concerned with song and performed speech. One reason for the bias is an obvious one: it makes little sense to attempt to duplicate the outstanding studies of drumming-based African rhythm by A. M. Jones, David Locke, Hewitt Pantaleoni, James Koetting, Nissio Fiagbedzi, Willie Anku, and Jeffrey Pressing, among others. Another reason stems not from a desire to go against the grain, but from a firm conviction that song rather than drum music lies at the heart of Northern Ewe modes of musical expression. I am not, of course, the first to insist that pride of place be given to song. J. H. Kwabena Nketia's *African Music in Ghana*, still the only comprehensive survey of music in Ghana, includes several chapters on vocal music, as does his widely used textbook, *The Music of Africa*. Klaus Wachsmann's view that "there is hardly any music in Africa that is not in some way rooted in speech"[3] is echoed in Chernoff's remark that "African music is derived from language."[4] Similarly, Locke introduces a study of improvisation in West African music with the remark that "song is the heart of African music performance. Accompanied song is the most prevalent music genre, and pure instrumental music is uncommon."[5] And Francis Bebey asserts unambiguously that "vocal music is truly the essence of African musical art."[6] There is, then, something of a dissonance between the overwhelming emphasis in the popular imagination on "African drumming" as the site of "complex rhythms," and the considered statements by specialists that song holds the key to understanding these musical cultures.

If song lies at the heart of African musical expression, and since song consists of a fusion or integration or amalgamation of words (or "language" or "text") and music – suppressing for now the possibility that the resulting "alloy" may define an "agonic" relationship – then a productive approach to the analysis of song will include primary emphasis on the rhythms of language.[7] We need not underestimate the fundamental differences between language and music as overlapping but ultimately independent semiotic systems in order to hold the view that the analysis of a "compound" art form, one that fuses the elements and processes of two systems, will have to engage with both systems at a basic level of the analysis. Moreover, the music–language conjunction is likely to prove fruitful at a metalinguistic level. For the technical and aesthetic vocabulary used by the Northern Ewe to talk about their language and music, although modest in extent, often reveals interesting correspondences and affinities.

It is this view of the centrality of language, a centrality enshrined in the claim that "without African languages, African music would not exist,"[8] that underlies

the approach taken in this book. I have arranged the contents to progress from the less concrete (rhythm as polysemous metaphor, rhythm as a fluid temporal process) to the more concrete (rhythm as technical concept, rhythm as a precise, quantifiable process) and back again. Accordingly, Chapter 1 begins with a "soundscape" of Northern Ewe society, a fictional ethnography which allows us to listen for manifestations of "rhythm" in the spectrum of physical activities that take place during a single twenty-four-hour period. Chapter 2 studies the rhythms of spoken and performed language, seeking to draw out the intrinsic "music" of language in motion. Chapter 3 is devoted to song. It begins at the beginning, so to speak, with children's songs and rhymes, proceeds to various adult genres, and ends with a "close listening" to one particularly beautiful Northern Ewe lament. Chapter 4 analyzes the rhythms of drum music, not as a repository of word-generated rhythms, but as a set of "temporal spaces" – with apologies for the mixed metaphor – in which performers (and listeners) play with "pure" rhythms. Chapters 5 and 6 move beyond the "local" to the "global" in musical and verbal performance. Chapter 5 contains an analysis of a single thirty-five-minute performance of song, drumming, and dancing by a group of youngsters, the Zìaví Zígí Group, while Chapter 6 examines a folktale performance by *Miwɔe Nényó Hábɔbɔ̌*, a Cultural Troupe from Pekí-Blengo. Chapter 7 revisits a model for conceptualizing Northern Ewe rhythmic processes introduced towards the end of Chapter 1, and closes with some reflections on some of the issues involved in notating African rhythm, referring in particular to the work of A. M. Jones.

It is one of the casualties of disciplinary specialization that because of its subject-matter, and irrespective of its actual method, a book about Northern Ewe music (or for that matter "non-Western" music) will automatically be classified under "ethnomusicology" rather than "musicology," thus departing from the precedent set by "comparative musicology" during the early decades of this century. While I do not think that labels are everything, I am conscious of the fact, and have often been reminded of it by not always hostile critics, that I am not a card-carrying ethnomusicologist. This book, accordingly, is conceived as a contribution to African music study rather than to ethnomusicology. Using my prerogative as author to hide, in one facile distinction, my amateurism in certain areas of scholarship, will not, of course, dissuade critics from asking hard questions. I am therefore obliged to say something about the book's overall orientation.

Recent appeals to pluralism, eclecticism, and even interdisciplinarity have provided us with a convenient rubric for imposing a new kind of coherence on how we study cultural objects while abdicating responsibility for some of the methodological choices we make. To say, therefore, that my approach is eclectic and interdisciplinary is to avail myself of this convenient, but easily misused, authority. Talk of a "soundscape" in Chapter 1 gestures towards anthropology or ethnography, while the continuing emphasis on language (especially in Chapters 2

and 6) points in the direction of linguistics. To assert the validity of indigenous critical, descriptive, and aesthetic language is to align oneself indirectly with the much-maligned notion of ethnotheory. And to speak of "perfect fourths," "linear descents," and "third spans" is to buy into an area of European music theory. Beyond these superficial and unavoidable points of disciplinary contact, however, the book is musicological and analytical in orientation insofar as my main interest is in the songs that the Northern Ewe sing, their style, structure, and texts, and in the mediating role of rhythm as conveyor of their significance. I have little to say about larger "contexts" that do not seem to be organically related to a musical core. In declaring allegiance to the so-called "music sound," however, I do not construe my objects of study as abstract, disembodied patterns of notes, nor as less than concrete embodiments of some social reality or other, but as *intentional discourses* in which sign complexes provide listeners (including singers, drummers, and dancers) with innumerable opportunities for the construction of meaning.

It will come as no surprise, then, that I do not subscribe to the view, however gently formulated, that "it is a mistake 'to listen' to African music"[9] if it implies that the songs of the Northern Ewe, for example, need to be propped up aesthetically by something extramusical. I would argue not only that listening to African music can be highly rewarding but that such listening must form the basis of any serious engagement with the repertoire. For whatever "listening" means, its application to the behavior of Classical music audiences – a move designed to underline differences between Classical music and African music audiences – often entails a vulgar reduction of the complex processes involved in listening to a Mozart quartet, a Schumann song, or a Mahler symphony to the realm of "passive" activity. The ritual absence of visible, externalized movement among Classical music audiences surely stands in reciprocal relation to the busy and sometimes involved process of trying to grasp the meaning of a drama in sound, an "inner" drama the apprehension of which allows the imagination ample exploratory space to indulge in a series of vigorous cognitive movements. To insist that it is *not* a mistake to listen to Northern Ewe music is not, of course, to claim that "listening" is all that this repertoire is good for. In "close listening," however, and without entertaining any illusions about the power of scholarly discourse, one can, I believe, contribute to the empowering of Northern Ewe musicians by bringing to bear on their compositions the same types and standards of scholarly scrutiny practiced on more canonical repertoires. And the fact that the music discussed in this book is made by "ordinary" Northern Ewe people and not by professional musicians says nothing about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of canonical techniques of analysis. For what must finally be resisted is the impulse to construct an Africa that is *always* different from the West. No doubt some differences cannot be suppressed, but one may be surprised

by the extent to which the need for, and circumstances of, music-making in Africa resemble conditions in other parts of the world, and bespeak a basic human need for artistic expression.[10]

One final preliminary that impinges on readership: writing about one aspect of the music of a little-known African group presents the researcher with at least two options, neither of which is entirely satisfactory. One option is to treat Northern Ewe materials simply as data for a Western audience, to apply "Western" methods of analysis, perhaps even propound a new theory for Western consumption, a theory all the more powerful for claiming to represent what Africans really think. By this "logic of extraversion," to borrow Paulin Hountondji's phrase,[11] the musical–intellectual condition of the metropolis is rejuvenated. The other option is to focus on providing reliable ethnographic data with the minimum of theoretical intervention, so that when Northern Ewes see their cultures represented in photographs, recordings, diagrams, and words, they can smile at having been included. If this book fails to meet the standards set by either agenda, it is partly because I have not been able to find satisfactory solutions to the dilemmas, and partly because I believe the difficulty to be instructive. No doubt I will be asked by my Northern Ewe readers why some names were mentioned and others not, why some pictures were included and others excluded, and why, in one particular case, I did not make the exact distinction that a chief had explicitly asked me to make if I ever referred to musical life in his village "over there." I will do my best to explain to him and to other offended parties that this book represents no more than the musings of an academic, and that a better-qualified researcher will undertake to represent them properly one day. (I doubt, however, whether they will believe me, especially after they see the price of the book and "advice themselves," as we say in Ghana, that all and not a mere 5% of the proceeds actually end up in my pocket.) By the same token some of my Western readers will grow impatient at the analytical descriptions given here, wondering why I haven't done the work that will produce a new theory. I can only hope that my ambivalence will be construed positively rather than negatively, and that the exploration of limits and the attempt to define an appropriate representational milieu for Northern Ewe music will be seen to have some potential benefits.

Towards a Northern Ewe conception of rhythm

There is no single word in the Ewe language for "rhythm." None of the lexicons currently in existence (Ewe–English or Ewe–German) has an entry for "rhythm." In Dietrich Westermann's Ewe–English dictionary *Evefiala*, for example, there is an entry for "rhyme" but not for "rhythm."[12] It is hard to believe that, with all the evidence around him of regular and energetic music-making, Westermann

could have failed to notice the importance of rhythm in the lives of the Africans whose languages he studied. Perhaps lexicons are meant only to record what is verbalized, not to mirror our patterns of behavior.

The absence of a single word for "rhythm" in Ewe does not, of course, imply the absence of the concept of rhythm. What it implies is that the semantic fields of the word are broadly distributed rather than lodged in one place. The Ewe word *vugbe*, for instance, could be translated as "rhythm" in certain contexts, although its literal meaning is "drum language" (*ʋu* = drum, *gbè* = language). If I say to a group of drummers "Mìɖòlì ʋugbe," I am asking them to "change the language of the drums." This is another way of telling them to change the dance, perhaps to beat Gàbàɖà instead of Gbòlò, each dance being defined by a characteristic rhythm. "Mìɖòlì ʋugbe" could therefore be rendered as "change the rhythm."

I could not, however, use the word *ʋugbe* in a discussion of the rhythm of song. In fact, I would have considerable trouble separating the dimensions of song into rhythm, melody, dynamics, texture, tessitura, and so on, as one routinely does in English, French, German, Italian, and other languages. I might ask the singers to "put fire inside" (*dé dzò émè*), which might result in both an increase in volume and, often unintentionally, a quickening of pace. I might complain about a performance that it is dull, or that it "wears slowness" (*éwɔ gblɔdɔɔ* or *edo agblɔɔ*), and this might elicit a greater density of rhythmic events, a swelling in dynamics, perhaps, or an increase in tempo. The context would determine what changes are considered appropriate by the performers. There are, in short, ways of conversing around rhythm without naming it. And it is this "always-connected" or integral mode of rhythmic signification that characterizes the Northern Ewe culture area.

Nowadays, with the advent of missionary education and culture, it has become necessary for choirmasters and music teachers to invent technical vocabulary for talking about music.[13] It is not always possible to distinguish between this newer, missionary-influenced discourse and the older, "traditional" discourse. The rendering of "melody" as *gbèɖìɖì* (the sounding of the voice) or *hagbè* (the language of song), of pitch as *gbèɖìɖì fé kɔ̀kɔ́mè* (the height of the sounding of the voice), of "harmony" as *gbèbáblá* (the tying together or blending of voices), of the "beginning" and "ending" of a song as *hà fé gɔ̀mèdzèfé* and *hà fé nuwúfé* respectively, and of "singing" as *hàdzidzi* (literally, "the singing of song"): these and other phrases fit so readily into the post-colonial context of hymn and anthem singing that they very likely are recent coinages. By contrast, a number of words and phrases used in the context of "traditional" performances do not betray this missionary influence as clearly. I might say of a given performance that *akayé mé sɔ̀ o*, meaning "the gourds do not agree," indicating ensemble problems, a lack of synchronicity in the beating of

the *akayé*. The same phenomenon, only this time involving a disparity between singing and instrumental playing, is captured by the phrase *èhàa tó ʋuɔ́ dòmè*, meaning "the song has passed under the drums." The single word *ʋu* refers simultaneously to dance, music, and drumming, evidence that here, as in other West African lexicons, there is no single word for "music", and that the concept of music is much broader than it appears to be in the West (especially when used in connection with art music since about 1700). While the origins of these words and phrases might be of interest to the etymologist, their continued use by today's Ewe musicians shows that here, as in other realms of post-colonial experience, the mutual existence of "African" and "Western" or "Western-influenced" concepts presents no aesthetic dilemmas.

The absence of a single word for "rhythm" in Ewe suggests that rhythm refers to a binding together of different dimensional processes, a joining rather than a separating, an across-the-dimensions instead of a within-the-dimension phenomenon. I have taken a cue from this interpretation to begin the present study of Northern Ewe rhythm on the broadest possible level, the level of the rhythms of society. For if the idea of rhythm as "always-connected" is as fertile as I claim it to be, then a proper understanding of rhythmic expression should begin by regarding, however briefly, broader manifestations of rhythm in society, rhythms that could function as a source for artistic borrowing and manipulation – not the only one, of course, since music inevitably refers to other music. A sketch of a Northern Ewe soundscape might serve to orient us to the nature of their sound world, and facilitate our isolation of rhythm for detailed scrutiny in subsequent chapters.

1

Rhythms of society

The rhythms of Northern Ewe society are those rhythms that are produced and consumed by the members of that society in the normal course of their lives. This potentially infinite set of rhythms includes everything from the cosmic periodicity of seasonal change to the localized rhythms of drum music. The "rhythms of society," in this broad sense, are not necessarily the rhythms of music. What they make available is a set of opportunities for artistic exploitation. In order to construct a "rhythmic soundscape" for the Northern Ewe area, we need to suppress, or at least underplay, the distinctions between music and non-music so that we can convey something of the diffuse state of Northern Ewe society. Then we will be in a better position to suggest ways in which they find meaning in the events that surround them and that they in turn create.[1]

What, then, happens during a single twenty-four-hour cycle in Northern Eweland? Many things, of course. But there is enough regularity in the order of events to enable us construct a hypothetical soundscape. That such a construction is at least conceivable to the Northern Ewe is clear from the fact that they recognize different times of day and night, and associate certain kinds of activities with certain times of day. For example, after-dark or night activities come with such prohibitions as "you do not sweep at night," or "you do not sell palm oil at night," or "you do not whistle at night." Table 1.1 displays the indigenous periodization with an overlay of clock time. In addition to Ewe and Siwu, which are the principal languages discussed in this book, Twi, which is spoken in parts of, or areas adjacent to, Northern Eweland, is also included in order to provide some scope for comparison.[2]

The Northern Ewe recognize seven active periods in the course of a single day: dawn; morning; afternoon; late afternoon or early evening; evening; night; and middle of the night. Developed primarily in response to the constraints of an agrarian society, this periodization is subject to various forms of enactment and

Table 1.1 *Indigenous periodizations of the day*

Time	English	Ewe	Siwu	Twi
4.00 a.m. – 6.00 a.m.	dawn	fɔ́ŋli	ɔ̀ɖesrɑ̌̃	ahomakye
6.00 a.m. – 12 Noon	morning	ŋdí	kayâ	anɔpa
12 Noon – 4.00 p.m.	afternoon	ŋdɔ	kakɔme	awia
4.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.	late afternoon	ɣetro	iwɛ̃ klɛ	
7.00 p.m. – 10 p.m.	evening	fiɛ̃	kutsuɛ	anwomere
10 p.m. – 4.00 a.m.	night	zã	kasɛ̃	anadzo
	middle of night	zã titina	Kasɛ̃ ndɛ̃	anadzo konkon

creative play. Northern Ewe culture is, of course, never static, and so it makes sense that its continual reinvention should involve a rereading and revising of some of the prescriptions of the past. The following account is fictional in the sense that it has been constructed to illustrate a point. While it is unlikely that a randomly selected twenty-four-hour period will see each event described below, the account will provide a sketch of the Northern Ewe sound world as a prelude to later reflection on its rhythmic nature.[3]

Dawn
(Fɔ́ŋli/Ɔɖesrɑ̌̃/Ahomakye)

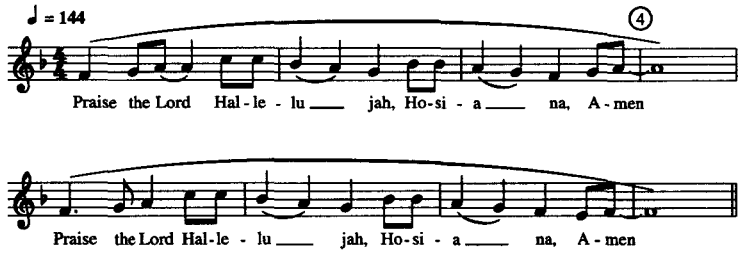
4.00 a.m. Dawn is a period of growth and emergence, a time for the private rhythms of sleeping and snoring, and of sexual intercourse. Drumming heard in the distance signifies the end of an all-night wake-keeping, the Northern Ewes' unstinting acknowledgment that when a person dies he or she must be "hidden" properly. As daylight appears, the noises of chickens, goats, sheep and other domestic animals gradually replace the shrill and distinct sounds of night. A cock's crowing cuts through the emergent noises, asserting his authority as guardian of the predawn. At 4.45 the first church bells announce the morning service that will begin an hour or so later. In practically every Northern Ewe town or village Christian churches may be found alongside sites of "traditional" religious worship. And there are not insignificant numbers of people who are in church on Sunday and at the traditional doctor's on Wednesday. Among Christian congregations, many are Roman Catholic or Evangelical Presbyterian. (In larger towns, one encounters Methodist and Anglican congregations as well.) Even more common are pentecostal or, as they are known locally, "spiritual" churches, which have flourished in Ghana since the 1960s: White Cross, Church of the Living God, Musama Disco Christo Church, Apostles' Revelation Society, and several others.

5.00 a.m. Devout worshippers have gathered at the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to hold a "morning devotion." For the next hour or so, they will sing hymns from the Ewe Hymnal, read scripture, and pray. The singing may or may not be accompanied by a harmonium. This depends on whether the congregation owns one, or on whether the organist, noted for a certain fondness for alcoholic beverages, made it safely home after a bout of drinking *akpeteshie* (locally brewed, potent gin), or *deha* (palm wine), or *pito* (millet beer) the night before, and whether, having done so, he was in a position to wake up early and attend the morning service.

From modest beginnings in the middle of the 1800s, the E. P. Church has undergone considerable change in its style of worship. While it was nominally opposed in the beginning to indigenization – except in the matter of providing hymn texts, the Bible, and prayers in the local languages – some of the congregational singing is now accompanied by local instruments (drums, castanets, and rattles), and there is invariably a youth wing of the church whose members sing, drum, and dance during Sunday services (these include the Christian Youth Builders [CYB] and the Christian Youth Organization [CYO]). These young people are often musically active outside the church as well, which partly explains the cross-fertilization between "sacred" (associated with church or other forms of religious worship) and "secular" (associated with recreational and ritual drumming) musical languages.

Down the road from the E. P. Church is the noisy Church of the Living God, whose members are not known for showing any kind of restraint when it comes to praising God. Singing at the top of their voices songs imported recklessly from elsewhere (in Twi, English, Ewe, Ga), some members will eventually enter into altered states. Theirs is very much a here-and-now mode of worship: none of that staid piety one finds in the more orthodox churches. Today, members are asking to be delivered from temptation and to be forgiven their sins. They are praying for children, for food, for clothing, indeed for all their earthly needs – has not the Lord assured them that He will take care of their needs? The singing is loud and spirited, the drumming equally energetic, and the dancing, depending on how the spirit moves, is sometimes freely, sometimes strictly patterned. A one-stringed double bass strengthens the musical texture, providing not only a three-note bass line but also a strong rhythmic pulsation. Drums, rattles, bells and castanets contribute their own sets of rhythms to the performance. The melody excerpted in Example 1.1 (CD track 2) provides the foundation for melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic improvisation.

5.30 a.m. Households rise from their mats. Soon, a whole slew of morning chores will be underway. Girls walk to the river to fetch water, balancing buckets on their heads. To relieve the tedium of work, they challenge one another. Who



Example 1.1. Melody upon which the Church of the Living God improvises

can take the most steps without spilling a drop of water? Who will be the first to fill her family's drum? Each challenge encourages the girls to regularize, that is to say, to rhythmicize, the fetching, carrying, and walking, all this in an effort to increase efficiency. Elsewhere, boys and girls sweep the compounds of their family homes. The sign of a swept ground is a continuous pattern of semi-circular shapes formed by the action of brooms on sand and stones. Making this pattern often invites a rhythmicization of the brushing action of the broom. One boy whistles the latest American pop tune he has heard over the radio, another quietly hums a hymn tune, a third sings a recreational song he learned the night before.

A group of elders has gathered in the family head's house to judge an alleged wrong-doing. A recently married woman has been accused of saying unkind things about her in-laws. She will have to defend herself in this mostly male domestic court. At this early hour of day, the rhythms of chewing sticks – an extended brushing of teeth – are eventually interrupted by the pouring of libation to begin the arbitration process. Then, the oldest elder invites husband, wife, and witnesses to present their cases. Passions rise as strong words are exchanged, but the framework of the proceeding is never violated. The wife escapes with a warning to watch her tongue in future.

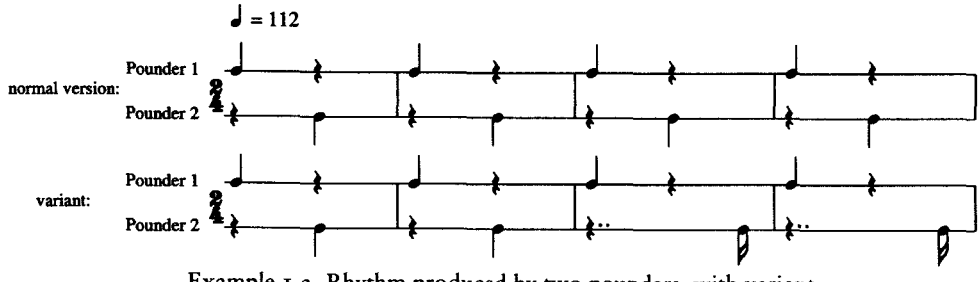
Morning meals are being prepared. The rhythms of grinding, pounding, chopping, and fanning combine to define one large, staggered pulse. Walking around a rural neighborhood, you can tell what is being cooked from how the pounding sounds. In the midst of all this, the town crier arrives with a message from the chief: all young men and women in the village are to gather in the local cemetery tomorrow morning to weed it. An announcement rather than ordinary speech, the town crier's delivery is a performative act. It is introduced and concluded by a series of loud bangs on the hand-held, single-pronged bell, and the spoken portions unfold in phrases of unequal length, separated by silences. Everyone listens attentively. In fact, you risk incurring a fine if you are found ignoring the town crier's message.

Morning
(ɔ́dí/kayâ/anɔpa)

6.00 a.m. The day's work has begun in earnest. In one home, girls are pounding dried cassava in a mortar to make *kokonte*. In another, they are pounding recently harvested rice in order to remove the husks. As with other forms of routine pounding (of which the daily pounding of fufu is probably the most prevalent), the work of pounding is made a little less routine by incorporating some rhythmic interest. In place of a regularly spaced alternation between two pounders, a variant, such as that shown in Example 1.2, may be introduced. Pounder 1 keeps a steady pace while Pounder 2 pushes her strokes closer to Pounder 1's. Later, the roles might be reversed so that Pounder 1 takes on the "improvisatory" role. Here as elsewhere in Northern Ewe culture, work merges into play and reemerges as work. And there is no better illustration of the need for cooperation in family as well as in societal living.

Some people are going from their rural homes to their urban places of work. Messengers, teachers, security guards, civil servants, and clerks travel by whatever means of transportation is available, or that they can afford: lorry, bus, taxi or foot. From Zìaví, Tanyigbé, Àkóefé, Àɖàklù, and Sókóɖe, they converge on the town of Ho; from Sántrókófi-Benua, Lólóbí-Kumásí, and Fódómè-Kpeme, they converge on Hóhoe; and from Ziave, Dzoanti, and Sovíe they converge on Kpándɔ̌. The rhythm of travel is a composite of several micro-rhythms: the rhythms of competition for seats in lorries, the rhythms of formulaic greetings among friends, acquaintances and strangers; the rhythms of speech in the routine exchange of fresh gossip; and the rhythms of vigorous car-horn communication between drivers and other drivers, or between drivers and their numerous "fans" spread across the tiny settlements linking village to town.

Farmers begin their hike to their farms, where they will spend a good part of the day. Men, women (some with babies on their backs), and children, many carrying farm tools (hoes, cutlasses, and guns) in large bowls balanced on their heads, or in sacks hanging from their shoulders, walk steadily along bush paths to their places of work. They will not pass or meet anyone on the way without greeting the person. Different greetings are exchanged with people who are



Example 1.2. Rhythm produced by two pounders, with variant

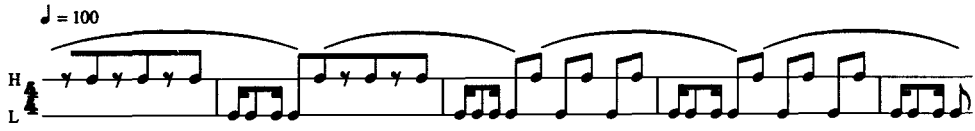
returning from the farm (having perhaps spent the night there) or with those who are already busy at work. Some will need only twenty minutes to get to their farms, while others may take a couple of hours.

8.00 a.m. Public school starts with a formal assembly of pupils and teachers. Smartly dressed in their starched and ironed uniforms, pupils recite the national pledge, say a prayer, and perhaps sing an anthem. The head teacher announces the day's work schedule, tells about future special activities, and then reads out a list of names of pupils who are to be caned for acting contrary to some school regulation or other. Caning, too, has a rhythmic dimension that is not lost on the giver and certainly not on the receiver. Between now and the early afternoon, these pupils will be under the control of their teachers. The school bell will be rung at the end of each lesson period. There will be a break for lunch. In addition to instructing pupils academically, teachers will find time for them to break, play, do sport (typically, playing football for boys and netball for girls), or even do some farm work either on the school farm or on a teacher's own private farm.

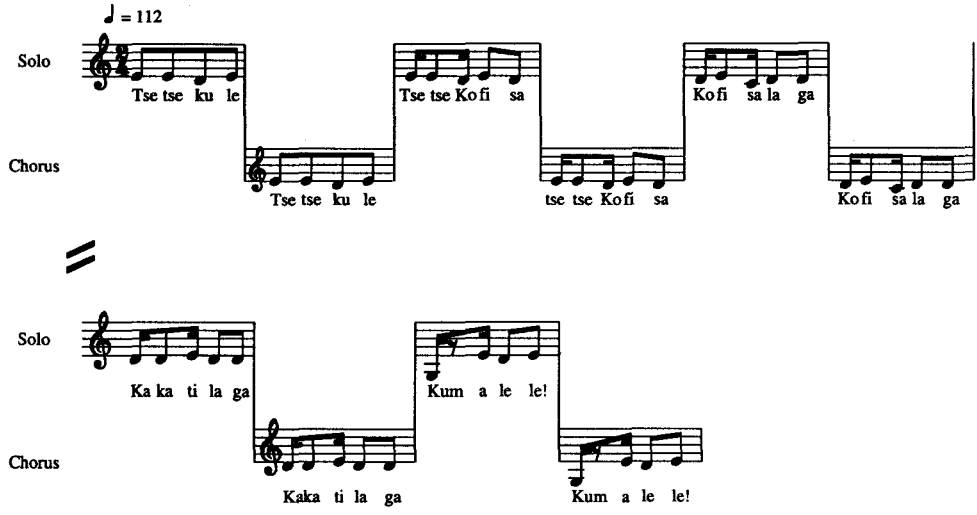
In some government offices, and especially during periods of great economic hardship (one recalls the famine year of 1983), many turn to organized religion for hope and comfort. The working day begins with a short prayer meeting. Idle moments – some more than just brief moments – are spent reading copies of the New Testament supplied by the Gideons International, and the lunch hour may include moments of song and prayer. While this turn to evangelical Christianity is, for many, a stopgap as they await a "lucky break," a period of economic prosperity, for others it will last past the famine years.

9.00 a.m. The day's labors are in full swing everywhere. In towns as well as in villages, corn mills go to work, polluting the air with smoke and the environment with noise. Cloth weavers are at their looms, often singing, humming, or whistling as they work. Potters, seamstresses, hairdressers, bricklayers, basket weavers, and carpenters: these and other workers fill the Northern Ewe soundscape with rhythms of work. When carpenters nail and drill, for example, they unfailingly incorporate some sort of pattern into what would otherwise be a series of undifferentiated pulses. That is why practically every Northern Ewe child knows the rhythm transcribed in Example 1.3 (CD track 1), a rhythm that carpenters rehearse hundreds of times a day as they hammer nails into wood.

The scene of greatest rhythmic expression is the marketplace. If you travel in the Northern Ewe area, you will not go far before you come across a market – a small, local market, or a larger, cosmopolitan one. Market days are reckoned following the traditional four-day week (about which we shall have something to say later). While small markets allow routine purchases of goods and services, big market days provide opportunities for bulk or special buying. Diverse and richly



Example 1.3. Popular rhythm used by carpenters



Example 1.4. Children's rhyme

textured, the market is the site of an extraordinary number and variety of forms of rhythmic expression. Some traders shout prices at the top of their voices, while others use quieter and cleverer ways to advertise their wares. Some practiced customers haggle over prices with traders, while others spend their time fending off thieves, toll collectors, or eager bookmen. Numerous acquaintances will be renewed, new ones will be made. In time, one learns to ignore some of the many voices that compete for attention : the onomatopoeic call "évivi ŋananana" ("it is sooooo sweet") of a fried-yam (*kolíkò*) seller, or the intoning of "ice water" by a chilled-water seller. Shoemakers and shoe repairers, often in high demand on these occasions, brighten up their situations of work in the same way that weavers and carpenters do. And the noises of cars, taxis, lorries, mammy wagons, and even articulators continually signify arrival and departure, adding their own periodicity to the market soundscape. Held in stalls, often in very hot and humid weather, markets are extraordinary moments of communal affirmation and competition.

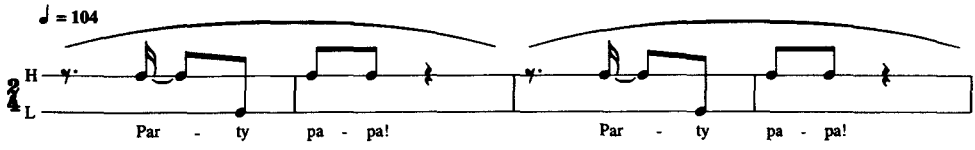
During breaks from academic lessons, school children invent and reinvent rhymes, games, and play songs. One popular game, "Tsétsé kulé," is played by children of all ages, and teaches coordination between spoken rhymes and hand focus on certain parts of the body, going from head to toe. A leader "calls" a line at a time, and the rest of the chorus responds by repeating it (Example 1.4). The

rhyme's syncopated figures are characteristic of the sorts of temporal displacements found in other Northern Ewe music. Although not indigenous to the Northern Ewe area, "Tsétsé kulé" is widely performed.

Elsewhere on the school compound, a group of girls (and girls only) is playing another popular game, *ámpé*. Played in groups of two or more, *ámpé* is a game of guessing and anticipation, choreographed in a deceptively simple pattern of body movements. Girl 1, the proposer, leaps into the air and puts one leg forward as she completes her descent. The task for Girl 2, the guesser, is to follow Girl 1's action while guessing which leg is going to be thrust forward. With each successful guess, the guesser becomes the new proposer. *Ámpé* combines at least three rhythms: first, an upbeat-downbeat clap pattern by which each guess is enacted; second, a repeated verbal phrase (typically, an enumeration of turns) with which each cycle is completed; and third, the "three-dimensional" rhythms of take-off and landing. These are, of course, not three radically different rhythms forced to cohere, but distinct components of a larger gesture.

As noon approaches, life in urban Eweland gradually approaches something of a climax. Chop bars, rife with the periodicities of boiling soup and pounding fufu, prepare for the arrival of customers. Many people will visit these wayside restaurants for a not exactly light lunch: fufu with light soup made from goat, chicken, or rat meat. This is no place to indulge individual fancies: you pay for your food, eat, and get out. On the whole there is something straightforwardly functional about the way Northern Ewe eat – which says nothing about how much they actually enjoy eating.

Meanwhile car-horns continue to engage one another in a variety of slogans. If there is an impending political event (such as a national election), then there is all the more reason for such "conversations" to take place. During the campaign leading up to the Second Republic, for example, supporters (including taxi drivers) of Dr. Busia's Progress Party used a favourite slogan, "good party" ("Party papa"), a slogan that was performed in a characteristic off-beat rhythm (Example 1.5).



Example 1.5. Progress Party slogan

In farming communities, by contrast, life is somewhat quieter since most people are away on their farms. Among those who remain behind are the sick, the insane, the aged and their helpers. Some may occupy themselves with modest tasks at home, some will rest, while some may even get up to some mischief. On the farms, activities vary in type and intensity. In the appropriate season among

the Akpafu, for example, groups of men and women, formed into small cooperatives, help individual farmers to clear swamps and plant rice. Not infrequently they compete to find the most efficient group of workers. Singing often forms a part of this competition, one group taunting the other, or simply declaring its greater efficiency.

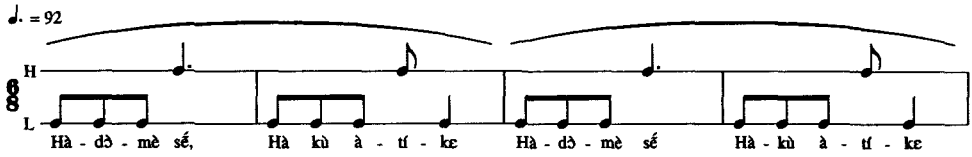
Afternoon
(ɔdɔ̌/kakɔme/awia)

12.00 Noon marks an important turning-point in the lives of many Northern Ewe. For many rural people, the position of the sun, manifest in length of shadow, is still an important marker of this transition. Shadow length may guide discussions about when to take a break, when to eat, when to change pace, or how to assess what remains to be done before the working day ends. At school, the bell invariably announces noon, and with it lunch. In these days of heightened cultural awareness, the sound of the bell is sometimes replaced by the sound of a pair of talking drums, delivering a coded message: "Hàdɔ̀mè sɛ̃́, hà kù àtíkɛ," which means that "the pig has a strong stomach, the pig has taken medicine" (Example 1.6). In urban areas, offices shut or simply slow down as workers go out to lunch, illicit lovers meet, and money lenders chase after their debtors.

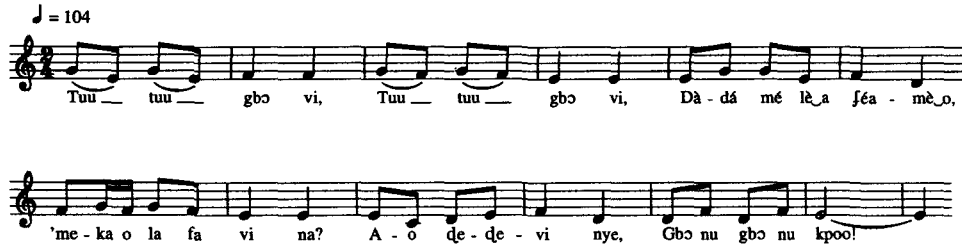
1.00 p.m. A mother is putting her child down for a nap. She herself is quite tired, having been on her feet since the crack of dawn. She finds a spot in the shade of a mango tree and sings her child the one lullaby that every Northern Ewe mother knows, "Tuutuu gbɔvi" (Example 1.7). A gentle, rocking motion from side to side accompanies her singing, each turn coinciding with a crotchet beat. The child is hardly asleep when she, too, dozes off. It will be a good half-hour before she realizes what hit her.

2.00 p.m. The rhythms of private and public greeting continue to reinforce some of the bonds that define the Northern Ewe as a people. The structure of a given greeting may depend on the time of day and on when the parties last saw each other. Greeting allows people to inquire about others' health, to thank them for favors done recently, to congratulate them, and to express condolences either in respect of a specific death or in respect of deaths in general. Not all forms of verbal exchange are as formal as these. Manual workers, for example, might be "energized" by the familiar Ghanaian phrase, "Ayikoo," to which the proper response is "Yaa ee."

School children go into a special lesson called "culture," where they learn about different ways of living. Anything from festival celebrations to funerary



Example 1.6. Talking drum signal for lunch



Example 1.7. Popular lullaby

practices may be included in this lesson. Elsewhere, pupils are rehearsing a neo-traditional anthem, or learning about the institutions of chieftaincy, or practicing some traditional dances. Let us dwell on two of these.

Pupils at the E.P./L.A. Middle School at Ho-Bankoe are learning Dr. Ephraim Amu's anthem "Mommyenkɔ so Mforo" (composed in 1947) in preparation for a coming school district singing competition. Since they do not read music, they are having to learn entirely by ear. Although he reads staff notation, the music teacher does so with difficulty, so he has transposed the entire work into tonic solfa notation. With the help of a tuning fork, a piercing falsetto voice, and a cane to both beat time and punish the inattentive, he goes through each of the four vocal parts (treble, alto, tenor, and bass), having the pupils sing after him. Gradually, and after much repetition, the choir begins to produce sounds approximating to what Amu intended. This oral/aural approach to learning is the normal method for choirs like this, whether they are learning a specially arranged folk song, a neo-traditional anthem, or the Hallelujah Chorus.

At the Pekí-Blengo Middle School, teachers and pupils are preparing for an inter-school cultural festival and competition. They have chosen to stage a mock durbar of chiefs, and this is what they are rehearsing today. The key roles of chief, queen mother, linguist, and head of the *àsàfò* or warrior group have been assigned to various pupils. Since the entire student body is involved in this performance, the rehearsal takes place not on the normal assembly grounds, but on the much larger football field. Everyone dresses for his or her assigned role, and the entire group prepares for the procession. At the head are two drummers beating a pair of cylindrical drums. They seem to be clearing the path, announcing the imminent arrival of the chief and his entourage. Next in line is a group of women singing and dancing *Gbòlò*, a popular recreational dance. Then comes the queen mother and her entourage, flanked by numerous supporters and

admirers, many trading slogans and appellations. Following is the paramount chief himself, carried in a palanquin by six men. Although he sits with a dignified pose most of the time, he stands up from time to time to dance, carving out elegantly restrained movements that convey qualities of bravery, strength, and authority. The pitch of the procession goes up a notch every time the chief dances. At the end of the procession is another pair of drummers, who provide a symmetrical balance to the two that head the procession. These drummers are "talking" on so-called *Tumpaní* drums (from the Akan "Atumpan," talking drums). A slow, dead beat conveys a message of seriousness. Meanwhile, members of the *àsàfò* group are moving anxiously about the entire procession, pointing their guns in all directions as if in search of the enemy. Although the procession as a whole seems to move at snail pace, it features a complex network of patterned and unpatterned movement, learned and spontaneous behavior, improvised and rehearsed singing and dancing. The whole is, of course, never accessible from any one angle, except perhaps in the ethnographer's fictional text.

3.00 p.m. Back from school and stealing time from household chores, boys and girls find a little space to play. Boys play ball, draughts, pebbles, cards, and beads. Girls do clapping games, play nurse, and hop-step. In one village home, an uncle has arrived for a visit. Everyone seems happy to see him even though he arrived unannounced. Greetings are ritually exchanged, and the *amanie* or news is heard. Mother now has to worry about feeding this extra mouth while children lament the loss of some of their play time.

Girls in some rural areas make trips to the river to fetch water while their peers in urban areas visit the commercial taps to do the same thing. As they grow older, opportunities to leave the house, especially under the guise of running errands, are greatly welcomed by girls. On a trip to the river or tap one may encounter distractions of various sorts: watch fights, make fun of the mad woman, converse with friends, and gossip.

At the local football park, a match between two rival teams is in progress. As always, the scene is extremely crowded since football, like religion, can have a strong hold on the imaginations of many boys and men. Those unable to attend the game will not be spared periodic shouts of "goal," or spontaneous cries expressing admiration for brilliant displays of skill. Heard from afar, and especially in rural communities, the "music" of a football match is a marvellous communal song, one of the few instances of "unison singing" involving an entire village.

5.00 p.m. The sun is going down. Farm workers are returning home with their loads of food and firewood. Evening meals are being prepared. As usual, the sounds of pestles on mortars fill the soundscape. Meanwhile, office workers who live outside the metropolis shoot for the lorry parks, taxi ranks, and bus stops.

The late afternoon, too, is a period of transition, a relatively easy transition from a period of work to one of rest and recreation.

6.00 p.m. Talking drums are heard from a village chief's compound. The chief has summoned all clan elders to a meeting. Each clan head is called by a distinctive drum pattern. This is "secret" music in the sense that, although it is heard by many people, its code is decipherable by only a handful of them. When the elders assemble in the chief's courtyard, the linguist performs a libation. He begins by invoking departed souls, ancestors, elders, previous chiefs, and legendary figures. When his memory fails, one of the clan leaders prompts him. The belief is that since the linguist is praying on behalf of the entire village, a bad prayer – for example, one in which the names of important ancestors go unmentioned – could bring retributions upon the whole village and not just upon the elder doing the praying. That is why corrections have to be entered immediately. Then he tells the gods why their help is being sought and in what way. When the chief himself speaks, he does so through his spokesperson or "linguist," the *ɔkyeame*, whose role is to "hear" what the chief has to say so that others may hear it too. In the same way, the chief will not be addressed directly, but through an intermediary. It is partly because of this obligatory mediation, which in turn engenders several repetitions of the same verbal formulas, that the proceeding as a whole acquires a periodic sense.

Evening

(fiẽ/kutsuɛ/anwomere)

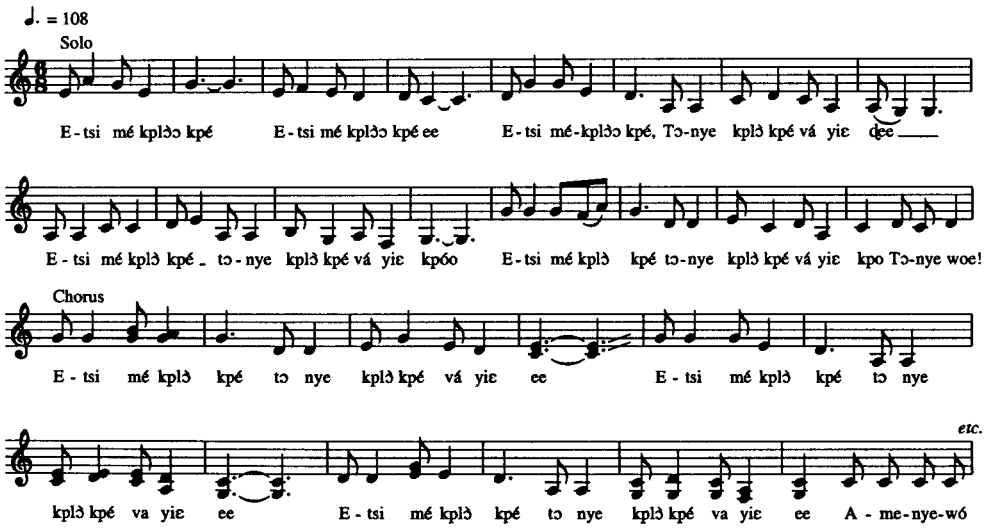
7.00 p.m. The onset of darkness in Northern Eweland signifies both ending and beginning. The working day ends here for many rural people, and it is followed by a dense network of formal and informal musical activities, some of it ritually determined, some of it totally spontaneous. It is as if the Northern Ewe care for their bodies by day and their souls or spirits by night.

In Kpándǒ, members of Mr. Nuatrɔ's *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀* group, one of the oldest and best-known of such groups, are rehearsing as well as performing *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀*. This recreational music dates back to the 1950s, and is big in Kpándǒ, although it is now widely performed not only elsewhere in Northern Eweland but also in parts of the country where there is a significant Ewe presence. Adult drummers, dancers, and singers join together to make music until evening turns into night, sometimes until night turns into middle of the night. Simple, hymn-like anthems accompany a moderately paced beat played by an ensemble of drums, bells, and rattles, to which dancing women move their bodies in synchrony. It is, of course, understood by all who participate in it that an occasion like this, although intended for making music, has numerous other fringe attractions. Certainly, a number of boy–girl liaisons have been formed on this site.

Elsewhere in Kpándǒ, one of the leading choirs of the Volta Region, the Celestial Joy Singers, is busy learning parts to a number of neo-traditional

anthems. Included in the choir's repertoire are anthems, hymns, arrangements of "traditional" songs, recreational songs, and adaptations of children's game songs. In contrast to traditional rehearsals/performances, this is strictly a rehearsal, a time to learn and perfect what has been learned in order to perform it at a later date for a non-participating audience.

In the village of Akpafu Todzi, a small group of women has gathered at the home of their lead singer to sing *Agblehawo* ("farm songs"). This is a genre of songs in Ewe, thought to have been brought to Akpafu during the 1950s. The lead singer teaches both the Call and Response parts of each song. These "farm songs" offer a forum for reflecting on, and creatively responding to, life's vicissitudes. Although, to the Akpafu, the songs are in a "foreign" language, their style and structural processes have been "domesticated," that is, brought in line with indigenous Akpafu song expression. Example 1.8 (CD track 3) is typical of the genre.



Example 1.8. Farm song (*Agbleha*)

In Akpafu-Adɔkɔ, a number of children gather in an open space to perform a children's dance, *Ilikpi*. This vigorous, moderately paced music is performed on homemade instruments, usually hollowed tins or cans with a membrane stretched over the open end. The dance is a simple side-to-side movement, with plenty of room for embellishment. The fact that the children are unsupervised on this occasion encourages some development of sexual independence.

In another village, a young man whistles to two or three friends in his neighborhood to join him in making the daily pilgrimage to the public latrine, which lies on the outskirts of the village. He either uses a signal that they recognize or reproduces the tonal and rhythmic characteristics of their names (this is also

what one does on talking drums). The idea of defecating communally is only partly motivated by the society's always-connected ideology. As it is dark, there may be snakes in the bushes, or human spirits that may elect to visit you while you are thus compromised. Among close friends, the mutual observance of the type and quality of the output may generate discussion about the culinary skills of their wives.

Elsewhere in the village, the sounds of night begin to form into distinct layers. The songs of birds, crickets, frogs, snakes, and other creatures of the night compete for attention with the intermittent shots of hunters, and these in turn are superimposed on top of the sounds of different types of music-making. And with the recession of the mechanical sounds of mills, cars, and engines comes a new and fresh silence that also competes for our attention.

8.00 p.m. In Avenui, children have gathered to tell stories and trade riddles. Story-telling will continue for as long as the participants are resourceful. Typically, each new story opens with a beginning formula. Then follows the narration proper, which is interspersed with spoken and sung interludes, spontaneous echoes of affect, and occasionally dancing. Then another formula closes the tale, but not before the narrator has explicated the moral of the story. One boy may bring along a bell or the blade of a hoe to accompany the singing of the interludes, while a girl may bring an *akayé*, a gourd rattle, for the same purpose. Built into the close of each tale is a mechanism for passing the mantle on to the next narrator. Like the pouring of libation, folktale narration is both integral and communal, a confluence of speech, song, and dance.

In Akpafu Todzi, a group of singers, drummers, and dancers are rehearsing and performing *Gòmlì* (lit. "the pot rolls over"). This dance was brought to Akpafu from the Anlɔ area, perhaps by an Akpafu citizen who lived there. *Gòmlì* has been beaten in Akpafu since at least the 1930s. It is an energetic dance that uses the same ensemble of drums and bells as the Anlɔ Àgbàdzá ensemble, and involves the same "back-breaking" dance movements.

In the Anlɔ community at Ho (Anlɔ Kɔ́dzí), Àgbàdzá is being performed by an informal group of musicians. They meet once a week to rehearse/perform this and other traditional Anlɔ music. In addition to dancers, drummers, and singers, there is an audience of participating and non-participating members. They will drum for the rest of the evening. If the occasion is a special one – such as the return of a distinguished or rich member of the community after many years, the settlement of a protracted dispute in favor of a member of the community, or a funeral – then the drumming and dancing may well go on all night.

In one village, a mobile cinema operated by the Center for National Culture is showing *The Adventures of Fu Man Chu*. Adults and children, many wrapped in sleeping cloths, congregate on the village arena to enjoy, assimilate, and later

imitate this version of Chinese culture. Some will be especially taken with the sound track.

Public radio boxes scattered throughout Northern Eweland bring music, news, and educational programs to those who either wish to take advantage of them, or whose homes happen to be located next to these boxes. It is time for the ever-popular "Listeners' Choice," during which requests for the latest in highlife, afro-gospel, afro-rock, afro-beat, fújì, and jùjú music will be entertained. At other times of day, "traditional" music from *Adowa* to *Kpanlogo* is broadcast. Careful programming by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation ensures that Northern Ewe listeners, like listeners in other Ghanaian culture areas, hear enough of their own music to feel that they too belong to the nation-state.

At the U.A.C. Gardens in Hohoe there is a dance, for which purpose a twenty-piece band has been hired from Accra to provide music. Upwardly mobile, middle-class, and often middle-aged members of the community come here to dance to 1960s-style highlife and consume large quantities of beer. Men go after other women, including upper-level secondary school girls who have managed to escape from their boarding houses. The band includes guitarists, drummers, trumpeters, saxophonists, a clarinettist, and two vocalists. The language of highlife music, with its repeated chord sequences, its affecting, sometimes trite, melodies, and its banal, but occasionally insightful, commentary on social life, holds a special appeal for a segment of Northern Ewe society that, for various reasons, shuns "traditional music" and shows little interest in the athletically demanding popular music that is streaming in from Europe and America.

Elsewhere in Northern Eweland, affluent families or individuals who own instruments (pianos and harmoniums are quite common) make music at home. In Akpafu-Todzi, for example, Mr. Nkrumah has brought out his self-made instrument, *Sawra*, with which he will entertain a group of children. *Sawra* is a curved stick, about three feet long, with a rough edge and a little resonating chamber attached to the top. Mr. Nkrumah "scrubs" the rough surface of the instrument to produce a grating, percussive noise and uses a separate hollowed-out shell to vary the resonance of the resulting sound. He has developed simple rhymes to go with this "music,' rhymes whose speech-tone patterns can be immediately imitated on the *Sawra*.

Night
(zā/kasē/anadzo)

10.00 p.m. Night marks another period of transition. As some retire to their beds, others prepare for a night of mourning and/or celebration.

The most common all-night activity in Northern Eweland is a wake-keeping, part of the funeral for the deceased. The status of the person being mourned determines how elaborate this event is to be. Also important is whether the dead

person was a Christian or not. In both cases, however, the funeral features a very wide variety of musics. Traditional dirges or *Avihawó*, which formed the backbone of such occasions in the pre-Christian era, continue to be sung by adult women. In addition, Protestant church hymns are frequently sung either to the live accompaniment of a harmonium or, more commonly these days, to a recorded accompaniment amplified over the public address system. And then there are groups hired to provide neo-traditional or traditional music. An *Àdèwú* group, a *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀* group, or an *Adowa* ensemble: one or more of these might be in attendance. Although there are differences between rural and urban wakes, the centrality of music to the occasion is never in question.

12–4.00 a.m. The expanded silence of night is intensified as midnight replaces night, completing the journey since dawn. The songs of night creatures continue to grow in importance, as do the private musics of sleeping and snoring and of sexual intercourse. Periodic gun shots heard in the distance remind us that, although the onset of darkness signals a period of rest and leisure for many Northern Ewes, it also signals work for others. When the cock crows again at 4.00 a.m., and the church bells sound at 4.30 a.m., and the last strains of drummed music are heard from the next village at 5.00 a.m., we know that we have come full circle. It is time for the cycle to begin again.

Ordering the soundscape

The foregoing soundscape is of course partial and incomplete. No verbal account of Northern Ewe culture can possibly hope to capture the totality of its modes of rhythmic organization. Sketchy as it is, however, our account should have underlined the plentiful and diverse ways in which, physically as well as psychologically, the Northern Ewe may be said to express themselves rhythmically. Our next task is to think through this informal account, to ask what kind of order there might be in these ways of rhythmic exertion, and to figure out how Northern Ewes find meaning in these activities.

Order emanates from *repetition*, and it is from doing the "same thing" over and over again that the Northern Ewe find meaning in life. Ritual orders both "life" and "art." Repetition gives Northern Ewes assurance of the known and the familiar, enables them to take stock of what has been achieved, and provides a forum for creative interpretation and reinterpretation of culture. Since each repeated event occupies a unique place in ontological time, repetition subtends both stasis or consistency and dynamism. Iconographical data on African music may give the impression that instruments such as drums and bells, used a thousand years ago in Africa, are still in use today, thus signifying a "static" culture.[4] Yet it is hard to imagine a culture that is swifter at adapting musical expression from just about anywhere. The borrowing of children's game songs and the adaptation of popular musical idioms by highlife and pop groups are

cases in point. For every seemingly static aspect of artistic culture, there are several dynamic ones.[5]

Perhaps the overriding characteristic order that grows out of repetition is a form of unity produced by the convergence, or at least mutual existence, of certain opposed tendencies. The most obvious of these is the conflict between tradition and modernity, the former signifying a continuity, the latter a break, with past customs, beliefs, institutions, and attitudes. If, however, we keep in mind the fact that "tradition" is itself the product of several competing tendencies, including erstwhile "modern" tendencies, then we will resist the temptation to invoke neat, simplistic dichotomies to characterize Northern Ewe culture, and prefer less symmetrical, less clear cut oppositions that convey better the culture's complex nature.

Consider the conflict between clock time and native periodizations of times of day as set out in Table 1.1 (p. 9). As noted earlier, the Northern Ewe exchange particular greetings at particular times of day. Implicit in the daily performance of these greetings is a regularization of activity: each repetition brings a sense of the familiar as well as the unfamiliar. As one cycle ends, another begins, and one looks forward to beginning again, not knowing exactly what is to come. Although they may appear to be routine or routinized, greetings enable a qualitative assessment of personal, family, and clan bonds. Superimposed upon the framework articulated by greeting transactions is a competing contour created by the twenty-four-hour cycle. Abiding by the constraints imposed by clock time is not optional for such people as government workers, school teachers, hospital staff, and bank clerks. No matter what the anecdotes stemming from a supposed "African Time" say, the idea – for it is an idea – of "5.30 p.m." imposes the same kind of constraint as the idea of "late afternoon." The Northern Ewe move in and out of these two forms of time reckoning. It is emphatically not a case of a "modern" practice (signaled by wrist watches) superseding a "traditional" one (signaled by length of shadow), but one of coexistence, sometimes harmonious, sometimes not.

Days multiply into weeks, weeks into months, and months into seasons, which may or may not coincide with calendar years. Here, too, temporal boundaries impose precise constraints that are not ignored but interpreted. For example, the interplay between the indigenous four-day week and the colonially imposed seven-day one actively shapes the schedules of many Northern Ewe. The four-day week, although originally a referential cycle informing work, trade, worship and recreational routines, is by now essentially a system for reckoning market days. The four days are *Asiamigbe* (with markets at Keta, Kpándǒ, and Have), *Afenegbe* (with markets at Kpedze, Anfoega, and Mátse), *Asitoegbe* (with markets at Kwamikrom, Aflao, and Tsito), and *Domesigbe* (with markets at Ho, Logba-Alakpeti, and Nkonya-Ahenkro).[6] In addition to regulating market days,

the four-day week may guide decisions about communal work and communal worship, for each day is associated with one of the lesser gods in the Ewe cosmological hierarchy. By contrast, a number of activities associated with the literate aspects of Northern Ewe culture are regulated by the seven-day week. Church services are held regularly on Sundays while banks, schools, and post-offices are shut at weekends. While there are inevitable conflicts between the two weekly cycles (what do church-goers do when a market day falls on a Sunday?), most Northern Ewes have developed strategies for resolving such conflicts. In fact, to call them "conflicts" may convey the false impression that they are departures from conflict-free norms. Like the native periodizations of the day, the four-day week is not merely the shadow of a forgotten past, to be retrieved by curious ethnographers or *Sankofa* ("go back and retrieve") cultural policy makers. It is an active presence, exerting greater or lesser degrees of influence on individual lives.

Cyclical regulation also comes from the seasonal patterns of planting and harvesting, a macro-level rhythmic activity that defines agriculture as a kind of performance.[7] Depending on the crop, there are either one or two seasons for planting and harvesting in the course of a single calendar year. Thus, cassava and maize have two seasons while yam, tomatoes, and rice have one. Like Northern Ewe greetings, the reciprocal rhythms of planting and harvesting provide, on one level, a measure of stability and predictability, while, on another level, the onset of each period brings its own uncertainties: how much rain or sunshine there might be, whether there will be accidental bush fires, what harm grass-cutters will cause, and so on. And this is in addition to the fact that patterns of planting and harvesting influence the density of music-making events.

Annual festivals also provide a recurring opportunity for the Northern Ewe to examine, refine, or simply celebrate their cultural resources. There is no Northern Ewe town or village that does not celebrate at least one annual festival: yam festivals are the commonest, but there is also a "wall-breaking festival" (*Glìgbàzã́*), rice festival, town-cleansing ritual (*dukpɔkplɔ*), and so on. The scheduling of these events is determined sometimes by the Roman calendar, sometimes by the nature of the harvest, and sometimes completely arbitrarily. Moreover, festivals, like funerals, provide opportunities for the renewal of intraethnic (as distinct from interethnic) ties. Few Northern Ewes will find ultimately disruptive the flexibility with which festival dates are conceived or, for city-dwellers, the often unexpected need to visit their rural "homes".[8]

Festivals form one category of "occasional music,' others being the musics associated with the events of the life cycle: birth, puberty, marriage, and death. But although we often speak of songs or dances appropriate to particular occasions, the concept of "occasion" is more flexibly and broadly conceived than some writers have indicated. An occasion is a construction based on the

exercise of an artistic impulse. In this sense, there are as many occasions as there are exercises of such impulses. When, in the course of a folktale performance for example, music appropriate to funerals is sung, the participants are recreating the sense of another occasion within the confines of the current occasion. They may take advantage of this opportunity to learn a dirge or two, or learn about funeral practices, even though, as children, they are not yet ready to participate fully in an actual funeral. There is, however, no loss of reverence or spiritual authenticity when "serious" matters, usually matters associated with death, are broached in the context of play; a recreational occasion is in this sense a religious one as well.

Similarly, when the pupils of Pekí-Blengo Middle School put on a mock procession of chiefs, they are taking advantage of the "mock" element to construct a musical occasion, an occasion which, although it occurs in the context of play, is nevertheless viewed seriously. For example, the pouring of libations on these occasions is not done carelessly, for there is an underlying belief that one of the departed ancestors who is being called upon may decide to visit the living (he might even do it during the performance by possessing a particular individual!). Similarly, the palanquin in which the pupil-chief rides during the mock durbar is not an artificial one; in fact, it belongs to the stool of the Paramount Chief or Tɔ́gbégã́ of the Pekí traditional area. It has been borrowed from the palace only after appropriate sacrifices have been made, and prayers said. This interpenetration of things "light" and things "serious" underscores the point that, from one point of view, the gap between "life" and "art" is small, perhaps even nonexistent. It also hints at the continuity between child and adult worlds (a continuity that will become better apparent when we consider children's game songs in Chapter 3), and underlies the essential "spirituality" of the Northern Ewe people.

What we have been saying, then, is that Northern Ewe life is fundamentally ritualized, and that repetition provides a key to understanding ritual. Yet a proper understanding of this idea is not possible without a concomitant stress on processes of conflict, change, and creative adaptability. To say, for example, that the distinctions between rural and urban, between tradition and modernity, between work and play, and between child and adult languages in Northern Eweland are, at best, highly problematic may lead some readers to imagine a fundamentally *syncretic* society. All societies are, to some extent, syncretic, even if, from our vantage point, and perhaps lacking the appropriate historical data, we have become desensitized to the "foreign" elements in a particular culture. For the Northern Ewe, the on-going invention of culture, even where undisguised "foreign" (usually "Western") influences are involved, is not a tendency to be resisted. Just before a performance of traditional dances in Akpafu-Ɔdɔmi in July 1986, the chief's linguist told the ancestors in prayer that the performers wished to do things "according to today's open eyes." Armed with this view, one is not

surprised to find that the instruments of the CYB group in Aɖɔkɔ include a bugle, that performances by the *Totoeme* group of Peki-Tsame are energized by a hand bell, or that one of the main drums used by the *Miwɔe Nényó Hábɔbɔ̌* is a side-drum left over from earlier days of colonial contact. Increasingly pluralistic in outlook, Northern Ewe expressive modes show no need to effect a reconciliation between "local" and "foreign.' All modes are potentially "local."

Conceptualizing the rhythms of the soundscape

How, finally, can our soundscape be conceptualized within a stricter and more traditional definition of music?

Each one of the modes of signification outlined above is essentially rhythmic, that is, it forms part of a temporally constrained process in which there is implicit or explicit differentiation of accentual weight among its units. Each rhythmic structure can be analyzed either "two-dimensionally" as a succession of beats or of groups of beats, or "three-dimensionally" as the projection of a two-dimensional process into gestural space. The crowing of a cock outlines a pitch contour; the regularity of church bells creates a rhythm; the narration of a folktale is temporal, interspersed with real music, and always kept within the constraints of a performance. The sound of a corn mill, with its mechanical regularity, is or can be construed as a form of music, interacting and contrasting with the less symmetrical rhythms of walking, talking, cooking, dancing, playing, and greeting.

Can we move beyond metaphor to give specific technical designation to the periodicities encountered so far? In one sense, we cannot, of course, for the analysis of music, even where it dispenses with ordinary language and substitutes symbols or a severely technical language, relies on concepts, themselves accessible only through language, which is in turn fundamentally metaphorical. We are therefore trapped in metaphorical space; in fact, there is, according to this view, no other mode of (verbal) existence. In another sense, if we think of this governing space not as a constraint but as an enabling condition, then we can fruitfully explore degrees of semiotic transfer across the realms of symbolic activity detailed above. In what follows, I have chosen to forsake the broad brush of speculation – of which I have already indulged in my fair share – for a more modest, but I hope concrete, discussion of those aspects of Northern Ewe rhythmic expression that are likely to be of interest to musicians.

The simple model given as Figure 1.1 is designed to impose conceptual order on Northern Ewe modes of rhythmic signification. I have postulated gesture as the primordial rhythmic event (stage 1). Gesture is the physical manifestation of a more fundamental communicative urge. Thus temporalized, its primordial status is, of course, accessible only through speculation and introspection, but

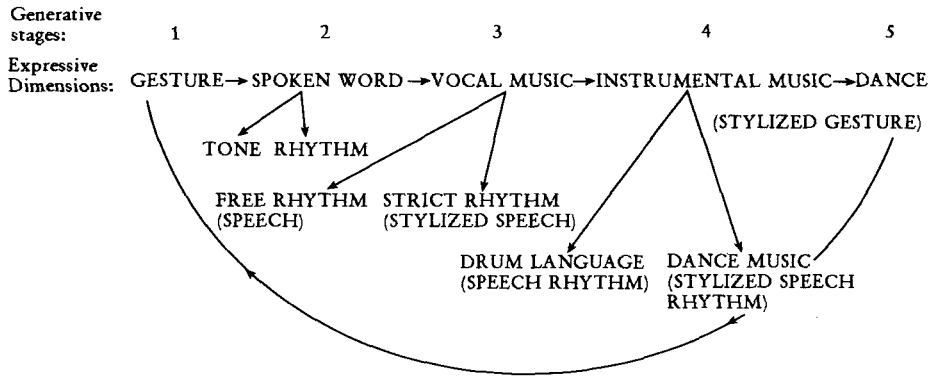


Figure 1.1. A model for conceptualizing the domain of rhythmic expression

when deployed within a clearly defined context, its communicative potential and intention cannot be doubted, even if the mode of communication signifies in multiple ways. Stage 2 of the model is made up of the spoken word. The implied generative relationship (between gesture and the spoken word) is only one of several possibilities. If gesture subtends a communicative dimension, then we must assume that both addresser and addressee have a common language, a language of gestures. Only by sharing a "real," concept-dependent language are they able to interpret one gesture as "I am hungry," another as "I want to sleep with you," and a third as "Don't do it that way!" It would be more accurate, therefore, to include a left-pointing arrow to show that gesture both is generated by, and in turn generates, the spoken word.

What is characterized as the spoken word is a unit of the normal hierarchically ordered language, in which syllables combine to form words, words under certain syntactical conditions are combined into clauses, clauses into sentences, sentences into paragraphs, and so on. Unlike gesture, which exists in a three-dimensional space, but whose meaning is given in a two-dimensional one – roughly the difference between language and metalanguage – the attributes of the spoken word, tone (pitch) and rhythm, are given in two-dimensional space.

Stage 3, vocal music or song, can then be understood as generated by the spoken word. Here too, we need to acknowledge another direction: the generation of song by song, that is, the existence of purely musical deep structures. The traces left by the spoken word on song vary in number and visibility according to style or genre. In its autonomous existence as a self-regulating semiotic system, song manifests two types of rhythm, free and strict. Free rhythm is unmeasured and recitative-like, and is perhaps more accurately described as "speech rhythm." Strict rhythm, by contrast, is measured and "song-like," and organized into recurring groups describable with respect to meter but not carrying a normative accentual pattern (such as strong–weak–weak in triple meter or strongest–weak–strong–weaker in quadruple meter).

Song then generates instrumental music (stage 4), which is to say that instrumental music takes over the rhythmic and tonal attributes of song but leaves behind the verbal component. Instrumental music in this formulation is not meaningless; nor are its meanings exclusively "intramusical." On the contrary, instrumental music gives rise to a wide variety of meanings, some stemming from its context of generation from song, others from its attachment to other cultural symbols.

As in the case of song, there are "free" as well as "strict" rhythmic practices in instrumental music. Free rhythm is readily apparent in the well-known use of drums as speech surrogates, where drums replicate the rhythms and tonal patterns not so much of speech but of performed speech or oration. "Strict" rhythm structures dance music. Although dance drumming, in its regularity, appears to sever its connections with speech, this severance is only apparent, not real. We can observe a further parallel between the subdivisions of song and those of instrumental music. As before, it should be acknowledged that instrumental music is not merely reducible to a form of song or vocal music, but may be generated purely musically by, for example, a fascination with a particular rhythm. This playing with rhythms, like the Akan conceptions of *Agorɔ*, reconfigures music-making as an autonomous creative process.[9]

Finally, instrumental music elicits dance (stage 5), a form of stylized gesture. Northern Ewes normally respond to instrumental music not by quietly contemplating it but by moving sympathetically to it. (We might say that a contemplative audition is not one that dispenses with gestures but rather one that performs them silently.)

And so we come full circle again. Rhythmic expression, in this understanding, originates in gesture and terminates in stylized gesture. The latter is in turn the beginning of another enactment of the model. Among its practical contributions are the messages that in order to understand, for example, the complexities of instrumental drumming (stage 4), one needs to understand their origins in language and gesture, and that the true meaning of dance emerges only from a consideration of its linguistic bases.

Models have greater or lesser explanatory power depending on what range of phenomena they attempt to explain and the sensitivities of their antennae. The model given in Figure 1.1 has both synchronic and diachronic aspects. Taking a slice of Northern Ewe expressive culture, it freezes it for the sake of observation. But built into this larger view is an irreducible element of diachrony: the generation of successive stages of the model by previous ones, a process that can also be reversed. The model is therefore subject to various degrees and levels of temporal manipulation. On the most local level, a single performance could conceivably exemplify the range of processes enshrined in the model. On larger levels, a particular generative relationship may take months to materialize. And

just as the model simulates motion through a temporal spectrum, so it suggests movement through geographical space.

Our task in succeeding chapters will be to analyze in more detail the dynamics of the three central elements of the model – speech, song, and instrumental music – as isolatable (but not isolated) and internally coherent processes.

2

Rhythms of language

In the beginning was the word. Or so it appears in Northern Ewe culture. In city as well as village life, the verbal arts play a central role not only in situations of formal artistic expression but also in ordinary, everyday communication. The ability to use language effectively is a skill greatly admired and frequently demanded. When children get together to perform and improvise riddles, a high premium is placed on the ability to code an idea in language that not only has an intrinsic interest but embodies a timeless truth that resists facile decoding. A good story-teller is one who can draw on a repertoire of rhetorical devices to bring to life an all too familiar plot. In a ritual accompanying the formal welcome of visitors to one's home, the invitation to tell the "news" (*amanɛ*) is properly answered not by a detached and routine chronicling of events, but by a verbal performance. A good teller of news, even one who is reporting already known news ("We know it but we still ask," says an Ewe proverb) strives to provide as complete and entertaining an account of the (reasons for the) journey as possible. "*Amanɛ*," says another proverb, "is what makes the journey sweet." Among the qualities expected of a chief's spokesperson or *Ɔkyeame* is facility in language use. How else would he be able to convey accurately the chief's thoughts to the people, or pour libation effectively when occasion demands? In song performances, an expert *Dzènɔ* or lead singer is someone endowed with a cooked tongue (*àɖè bíbítɔ́*): a "cooked tongue" denotes verbal as well as musical prowess. Such a singer composes ingenious variations on standard or archetypal melodies while improvising verbal texts that will touch the hearts of her listeners. In traditional judicial circles, not only wisdom but the ability to speak clearly, effectively, and persuasively are highly valued. And in the new so-called "spiritual" or pentecostal churches, popularity (and success) as a minister, with its financial implications, is unlikely to extend to people who do not have a way with words. In a very wide variety of ways, then, the Northern Ewe place a

high premium on the verbal arts. To say therefore that the word was there in the beginning is to do more than use a figure of speech.[1]

It is a matter for speculation whether the expressive arts of the Northern Ewe subtend a verbal, musical or perhaps gestural (i. e. combinatorial) deep structure. The idea here is not to fall victim to the myth of origins properly denounced in recent post-structuralist theory, but to follow John Blacking in speculating that, in Northern Ewe culture as in the Venda culture that he studied, music may constitute at least *a* primary modeling system, alongside language.[2] Although there is little in the way of systematic discourse about such an abstract matter by the Northern Ewe themselves, we can infer an aspect of this thought from one of the strongest manifestations of a Northern Ewe "deep structure": the idea, articulated in a variety of ways, that identity is irreducibly communal, that the foundations of any expressive activity involve a primal duality, and that living always implies "living with." When in September of 1986 I asked Mr. Obed Vigour Kissiedu, a native of Have and Deputy Director of the Center for National Culture for the Volta Region, what it meant ultimately to be an Ewe, he answered that an Ewe is someone who cares deeply for his or her fellow human beings. Understood in context, this remark displays a unifying rather than dividing impulse, and it does so by insisting on an essential relationality in the construction of identity. This at-least-two view, translatable into different expressive domains, allows us to fantasize a Northern Ewe deep structure marked by *simultaneous doing*. In the art of music-making, as in the verbal arts generally, an irreducible togetherness obtains on the levels of production and reception, irrespective of the actual number of participants. Similarly, and again on a conceptual level, word and tone form an alloy that allows verbal and musical behavior to collapse into each other.

This foundational inseparability provides a valuable clue to the analysis of rhythm, for it immediately puts into question the possibility that the verbal arts can be defined neatly as discrete modes of expression, rather than as a sometimes diffuse, dependent, and non-autonomous body of expressive behaviors. The Ewe word for poetry, for example, is *hakpanya*, literally "words for carving song" (*ha* = song, *kpa* = carve, and *nya* = word). Poetry is thus conceived in relation to song, which is not to say that differences among types of song are treated casually. Another consequence of taking seriously the notion of a primal togetherness is that it undermines our confidence in some of the distinctions we rely on to convey the nature of the materials and principles of art. Consider, for example, the distinction between ordinary language ("Pass me the marmalade") and poetic language ("Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments"). Northern Ewe talk is characterized by a high degree of interpenetration between these two forms of language. For example, morning greetings are structured in such a way that they enable a person to go beyond routine inquiries in

poetic language about another's well-being ("Have you risen with life?") to offer thanks for favors done the previous day in ordinary language. Similarly, because it is a form of performance, the telling of *amanɛ* is marked by a heightening or "poeticization" of ordinary language.

If ritual texts are poetic, and since rituals of various sorts are performed continuously in the daily experience of the Northern Ewe, we may speculate that much of their "ordinary" discourse takes on the character of the poetic. By "poetic" I mean discourse that obeys certain poetical laws, laws based on sets of rhythmic (or, more broadly, metrical) constraints. It will be my aim in this chapter to appropriate this aspect of linguistic behavior for musical analysis. How, in other words, does language generate, interact with, or leave traces on musical structure? To argue for any of these types of relationship between language and music should, however, not lead us to oversimplify the central question of aesthetic translatability. Whether there is a transcendental aesthetic content that, by mechanisms and processes yet to be discovered, is made manifest in a variety of expressive media, or whether one mode of expression is simply or not so simply translated into another: these are questions that I suspect will continue to engage students of Northern Ewe culture for some time to come. For the more modest purposes at hand, we can say that, although the model introduced at the end of Chapter 1 showed a series of overall right-pointing arrows (i.e. gesture generates the spoken word, the spoken word generates the sung word, the sung word generates the drummed word, and the drummed word elicits stylized gesture, leading us back to our point of departure), our discussion pointed to the possibility of left-pointing arrows as well. For example, we know from descriptions of the compositional process that not only the spoken word but a textless melody may at different times generate what we call song. Without seeking to undermine the validity of the overarching categories "language" and "music," then, the following discussion will enable us to explore the musical element in language and the linguistic element in music.

Speech tone versus speech rhythm

Of the many features of spoken Ewe and spoken Siwu, two are fundamental to any discussion of music. The first is tone, the second rhythm. As is well known, Ewe and Siwu are tone languages, that is, languages in which variations in the relative pitch of syllables often determine lexical meaning. Individual tones or tonemes represent bands or intervals of pitch activity, and they differ in number according to language. For our purposes, and notwithstanding the results of some specialized linguistic research, we will speak nominally of three tones in both languages: low (L), mid (M), and high (H).[3] This is something of a simplification of the actual sound structure of Ewe and Siwu, but if we keep in mind the

essential fact that the scheme of speech tones is relational, then, from a musical point of view, such a distortion is acceptable as long as relative and rigidly contextual notions of "high" and "low" are applied throughout the analysis. In addition to these relatively fixed positions, various glides or glissandi are used to negotiate the transitions between adjacent syllables. Some words require a glide between low and high, others require one between mid and high, while still others involve an uninflected juxtaposition of discrete tone levels. A resultant intonational contour becomes another feature of spoken Ewe and Siwu. These phonological features obviously provide the song composer with a set of interesting precompositional constraints. Not surprisingly, different composers react differently to these constraints. What would be unacceptable would be the assertion that the pattern of speech tones *determines* the structure of the musical melody.[4]

Rhythm, by contrast, has been little studied, partly because of an ostensible opposition between tone and stress languages (Ewe and Siwu are clearly tone languages so – according to the argument – they cannot also be stress languages), and more obviously because the finer aspects of rhythm are in the end of more interest to the musician than to the linguist. By "rhythm" I refer to three specific qualities of language: stress, quantity, and resultant pattern. Stress denotes the relative weight or accent borne by a given syllable. (One need not prove, of course, that the entire system of Ewe or Siwu satisfies all of the normative requirements of a stress language in order to acknowledge that, for certain lexical items, stress is an invariant characteristic.) Quantity refers to the relative duration of syllables. As with high and low tonemes, long and short quantities are relative rather than absolute. Quantity, too, is of interest to the musician because it embodies a fundamental generative element of music, namely, the interplay between short and long note values. A standard way in which quantity works in Ewe is as a tense marker: a verb may be transformed from the simple past (or present perfect) tense into the present habitual by roughly doubling the length of the vowel. Thus "Me dzrá àbólɔ̃ [ètsɔ]" means "I sold bread [yesterday]" while "Me dzráa àbólɔ̃ [lè àsime]" means "I sell bread [in the market]." Finally, by resultant pattern, I refer to recurring groups of rhythms with a fixed disposition of duration and stress. Two-syllable words in a long–short relationship, two-syllable words in a short–long relationship, and three-syllable words marked by identical syllabic quantity (triplets): these are examples of rhythmic *figurae* deriving from spoken language. Like the rhythmic modes of medieval Europe, these frequently recurring patterns often embody the rhythmic life of Northern Ewe vocal as well as instrumental music. It is in this sense that language may be said to "generate" both vocal and instrumental music.

One crucial feature that will be highlighted in the examples that follow is a non-parallelism or conflict between "stress accent" on one hand and implied stress stemming from tone on the other. In other words, syllables that are stressed do

not necessarily display a corresponding emphasis resulting from a change of contour in their speech-tone pattern. Failure to grasp this pattern of competing accents explains some kinds of errors made by people attempting to speak these languages. A simple example may be helpful here. My last name, Àgàwú, is rarely pronounced correctly by "Westerners." While its tone pattern is LLH, its rhythmic pattern has a stress on the second syllable, making an overall pattern of unstressed–stressed–unstressed. All three syllables are roughly of equal duration. The trick, then, is to pronounce the name by putting a slight accent on the second syllable and respecting the rise in tone level on the third. A common error is to mistake the change of tone for a change in stress. Thus, some people pronounce "Àgàwú" with a strong accent on the last syllable to coincide with the change of tone. Others, however, pronounce the name by altering the tone pattern from LLH to LHL in an effort to maintain the accentual prominence of the middle syllable. (And there are, of course, other variations in mispronunciation that need not be entered into here.) Described as a conflict between "stress accent" and "tone accent," this explanation may sound somewhat cumbersome, but it in fact illustrates an important sonic property of language.

I have assembled, more or less at random, a number of words to illustrate some pertinent phonological aspects of Ewe and Siwu. As indicated above, my interest here is in the sound of the languages and its implications for musical structure. For the sake of economy in illustration, the pool of items has been restricted to trisyllabic words. Tone is, of course, operative on different segmental levels. Our initial concern will not be to understand the larger levels of behavior but to focus on individual words in light of the qualities mentioned above. One need not doubt the close connection between sound and meaning to see the pragmatic value of this bias. When Northern Ewe composers set words to music, when they seek – in one view of the compositional process – to realize the musical implications of language, they are of course concerned with both the sound and the meaning of words. There is little question, however, that sound engages them more directly and practically than does meaning.

Each of the ten words in Table 2.1 has the same pattern of speech tones: three high tones. Although none of the syllables is stressed as such, the first acquires, more or less by default, an agogic accent on account of its ordinal position. And since the pattern of quantities is even, each word, in musical terms, has the rhythm of a triplet.

The rhythmic character of some of the words may be modified by iconicity. Consider as an example the word *kákáká*, which is used to intensify a particular action. "Medzɔe kákáká" means "I waited a long time for him/her." It is natural in speech to dwell a little longer on the second syllable, thus producing a short–long–short pattern. Interestingly, *kákáká* is more nearly a triplet when heard as an "abstract" lexical item than in a concrete communicative situation.

Table 2.1 *Ten trisyllabic Ewe words with HHH tone pattern.*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. kákáká	(intensifier)
2. núsɔ́srɔ́	learning
3. lódódó	proverb
4. kpɔ́ɖéɳú	example
5. núfiálá	teacher
6. tútútú	exactly (intensifier)
7. súbɔ́lá	servant
8. núnkɔ́wɔ́	nouns
9. kúviátɔ́	lazy person
10. sédédé	law or prohibition

Table 2.2 *Ten trisyllabic Ewe words with LLL tone pattern*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. tɔ̀ɖɔ̀mè	river bed
2. bàbàyɔ̀ɔ	the termite hurries
3. nɔ̀nɔ̀mè	character
4. àdàɳù	advice
5. dzùdzɔ̀gbè	day of rest
6. vòvòvò	different
7. gbɔ̀dòmè	town center
8. sɔ̀lèmè	church
9. Gàbàɖà	(dance type)
10. dzòdàdà	fighting (among goats)

Similarly, in using the intensifier *tútútú*, the speaker will almost invariably lengthen the middle syllable in order that sound and meaning may be isomorphic. We may attribute these habits to iconicity, the realization in phonological space of a word's semantic value(s).[5] Although the extent to which the Ewe lexicon is iconic remains to be established authoritatively, it is clear that iconic effects occur quite frequently. (We shall have more to say about iconicity when we discuss folktale performance in Chapter 6.) Table 2.1, then, illustrates the tension between the normative, acontextual rhythmic structure of words (as mainly triplets) and their transformation in actual usage (as a syncopated short–long–short pattern).

The monotonal pattern LLL illustrated in Table 2.2 raises the same kinds of issues as those raised by the HHH pattern of Table 2.1. The normal durational

structure of each item in Table 2.2 is a triplet. The word *vòvòvò*, however, although not an intensifier, is rendered iconically. When it is used to distinguish among a collection of items, one might hear in the invariably elongated middle syllable a sense of expanse in the denotation of number. "Amehá vòvòvòwó" means "different groups of people." The resulting short–long–short pattern resembles *kákáká* in Table 2.1. In the case of *àdàn̨ù*, the nasalized and hence contracted, final syllable allows the middle syllable to emerge as slightly stressed. Item 4 has a stress on the middle syllable. Unlike item 6, whose middle syllable is extended for psycho-linguistic reasons, item 4's middle syllable bears an internal syllabic stress. Its structure points ahead to the "upbeat words" that we will encounter in the next table (2.3).

Table 2.3 *Ten trisyllabic Ewe words with LLH tone pattern*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. èvèlía	second
2. bèbèf́é	hide out
3. àzìzɛ̃́	dwarf
4. àdèʊ́ú	hunters' music
5. hàdzìlá	singer
6. dzɔ̀gbènyúie	good fortune
7. àɖùɖɔ́	urine
8. àgbàdɔ́	shed
9. àhùhɔ̃́e	mirror
10. àdèlá	hunter

While stress is perceptually hard to discern in monotonal words (HHH, LLL, MMM), it emerges more clearly in words with more than one tone level. The items in Table 2.3 are examples of such "bitonal" words, and they provide a clear illustration of an important principle of Ewe phonology mentioned earlier: the lack of coincidence between "stress accent" and "tone accent," the latter being necessarily lighter than the former. In items 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10, the middle syllable receives a slight stress in pronunciation. Although slight, this stress is nevertheless stronger than that which emerges by default on the third syllable, where the tone pattern changes from low to high. In musical metaphor, the pattern of beats is upbeat–downbeat–afterbeat, with no corresponding alteration to the quantity of each syllable.

Not all items in Table 2.3 are upbeat oriented, however. Items 2 and 6, for instance, bear a slight stress on the first syllable, making them downbeat-oriented, while item 5 seems to have equal weights on each of the first two syllables. In none of these items, however, is the stress on the third syllable.

Table 2.4 *Ten trisyllabic Ewe words with LLL-glide tone pattern (items 1–5), HMM-glide tone pattern (items 6–8), and MMM-glide tone pattern (items 9 and 10).*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. ɡaʃòʃǒ	time
2. àgbàlɛ̃̌	book
3. àgbènyǎ	life's matter
4. hàkpàkpǎ	(carved) song
5. vìkpàkpǎ	carrying of a child (on the back)
6. núkokǒ	laughter
7. núʃoʃǒ	talking
8. núɖuɖǔ	eating or food
9. srɔ̃ɖeɖě	marriage
10. ɔmelɛ̃̌	fish

A feature of Ewe phonology that has deep significance for musical composition – notational problems notwithstanding – is the negotiating of gaps between tone levels by means of glides or glissandi. Ewe has both falling and rising glides. Some are structural in the sense that they are built into the meaning of the word, while others are non-structural in the sense that they are brought on by the mood or circumstance of the speaker. Sometimes, too, glides represent regional or local variations in intonational patterns. In Table 2.4, the end-glide is actually the result of an assimilated fourth vowel, whose function is to qualify each word with the definite article "the." Just as the addition of the suffix "wo" (H) produces the plural form of most of the items (for example, *agbalɛ̃̌* is singular while *àgbàlɛ̀wó* is plural), so the upward glide makes definite an otherwise "ungrounded" noun.

It will have emerged by now that an important aspect of spoken Ewe as a pre-compositional resource is the series of competing accents that come from stress, tone, and pattern. Consider, again, the word *agbalɛ̃̌*. Its first syllable /a/ acquires a slight accent because it begins the articulation of the word. The second syllable /gba/ carries the main stress in the word. The third syllable /lɛ̃/ carries yet another accent not only because it departs timbrally and registrally from the two previous syllables, but also because, in order for the glide to be executed, the syllable's quantity must be roughly doubled from quaver to crotchet. Each syllable is thus marked for consciousness in a different way, resulting in a succession of *phenomenal accents*.[6] Their intensities, however, are not equal: /gba/ is strongest, followed by /lɛ̃/ and then /a/.

Table 2.5 provides additional data on patterns of tone and stress in Ewe (each stressed syllable is shown in italics). All words are triplet words. There is

Table 2.5 *Twenty trisyllabic Ewe words with LHH tone pattern (1–10), MMH tone pattern (11–16), and MHH tone pattern (17–20)*

Word/Rhythm	Tone Pattern	Meaning
1. àfétɔ́	LHH	master
2. ɣàɣláfé	LHH	hiding place
3. ɖòdzádzrá	LHH	selling of cloth
4. dùkɔ́wó	LHH	countries
5. dɔ̀láwó	LHH	angels
6. hàfíalá	LHH	teacher of songs
7. àtsúwó	LHH	husbands
8. dzòdófé	LHH	kitchen
9. bìabíawó	LHH	questions
10. dzìdódó	LHH	endurance
11. nyafɔkpé	MMH	sentence
12. xedzefé	MMH	west
13. amegã̀	MMH	big man
14. amewó	MMH	people
15. nyatefé	MMH	truth
16. alafá	MMH	one hundred
17. tɔsísí	MHH	river
18. nenémá	MHH	that way
19. anyígbá	MHH	ground
20. xevíwó	MHH	birds

Table 2.6 *Five trisyllabic Siwu words with LLL tone pattern*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. kùbènà	left (as opposed to right)
2. ìgbègbè	chest
3. kàkpàkɛ̀	shed
4. ìgbèɖì	cassava
5. sàmùrà	tortoise

no need to discuss the table further, except to note that the list includes words of different tone patterns (MMH, LHH, and MHH).

In order to give scope to the data assembled in Tables 2.1–2.5, and to show that the combination of stress, tone, and quantity is not restricted to the Ewe language but may be found in other languages, I provide another set of tables involving Siwu data.

All items listed in Table 2.6 have the same order of speech tone, quantity, and stress pattern. Each word has an LLL tone pattern, triplet formation, and a stress on the second syllable, except item 5, whose stress falls on the first syllable. The competition in accents is between a putative agogic accent on the first syllable and the more integral stress on the second.

Table 2.7 *Five trisyllabic Siwu words with MMH tone pattern*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. *ipɛmí*	knife
2. *kasɛ́í*	piece
3. *igbarā́*	sugarcane
4. *itā̃bí*	testicle
5. *iwẽ́í*	string

The agogic accent conferred on the third syllable of each of the words in Table 2.7 by virtue of a shift from mid to high tone is countered by a slight stress on the second syllable. Like other triplet words with a stress on the second syllable, the spoken form tends to approximate to an upbeat word as a result of the shortening of the first syllable to a semiquaver.

Table 2.8 *Five trisyllabic Siwu words with MMM tone pattern*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. *ikpabɔ*	thigh
2. *inɔgba*	wisdom
3 *fu*tutu	white
4. *buɛ*kpise	witch
5. *krɔ̃a*kaḍe	tomorrow

All the five words in Table 2.8 show marked accentual characteristics conforming to the general pattern of accenting either the first or the second syllable in Siwu and Ewe. In item 1 the stress is on the middle syllable. In item 2, the stress is also on the middle syllable although it is less marked. This suggests that there is a hierarchy of stresses in the language. Items 3, 4, and 5 have clear, unequivocal stresses on the first syllable.

The collection in Table 2.9 is uniformly marked by a strong stress on the second syllable and by a rise to the mid tone on the third. These words provide further illustration of the lack of coincidence between stress and tone.

Table 2.9 *Five trisyllabic Siwu words with LLM tone pattern*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. kà*tàŋ*gwai	chair
2. ì*k*òto	hat
3. ɔ*kà*ti	cloth
4. sì*dzì*mi	stupidity
5. à*mà*niɛ	news

Table 2.10 *Five three-syllable Siwu words with MML tone pattern*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. ku*wa*gɛ̀	armpit
2. i*ya*tà	leaf
3. *sɛ*rɛrɛ̀	slip
4. ɔ*ma*gɛ̀	town
5. ɔ*tɔ*bè	vein

Items 1, 2, 4, and 5 of Table 2.10, like the items collected in Table 2.9, have stresses on their middle syllables while item 3 has a stress on the first.

Table 2.11 *Fifteen trisyllabic Siwu words with LMM tone pattern*

Word/Rhythm	Meaning
1. ɔ*raq*ui	weeds
2. ì*wã*ri	sand
3. ì*kpa*yo	hut
4. ì*tɔ*me	word
5. ɔ*rarã*	heavy
6. kà*se*ge	hearth
7. sì*kpa*kpa	seniority
8. ɔ*ka*la	shadow
9. ì*wɔ̃*mi	star
10. kà*burɛ*kɔ̃	door
11. yù*ku*kpe	thief
12. sì*nya*tu	saliva
13. ì*rɛ*kpo	cheek
14. kà*rɛ*kɔ̃	sleeping place
15. ɔ*kar*ɛ	ginger

The words in Table 2.11 present instances of apparent coincidence between "stress accent" and "tone accent." Because each word displays an LMM pattern, a slight stress accrues to the middle syllable on account of contour change. But this lighter stress is supplemented by a weightier stress derived from each word's actual stress pattern. It is instructive to compare LMM with LLM words that have a stress on the middle syllable.

The foregoing effort to hear tonal as well as rhythmic characteristics in Ewe and Siwu may strike some readers as, at best, an ambitious extension of a giant and imprecise metaphor: language as music. Even granting the notational inexactitude of the presentation, there can be no doubt – especially if readers perform these words to themselves – that speech tone and speech rhythm are fundamental, character-defining traits of the two languages. The extensive literature on African tone languages testifies to the concreteness of the phenomenon, and to the fascination that it has held for linguists. And among musicological studies, there is hardly a study of melody that does not rehearse the constraining influence of tone. Yet, the (to me) equally important rhythmic aspect of language has elicited only reticence from scholars of music.[7] Perhaps it is time to listen to these languages again, focusing on their temporal structure and the *figurae* of rhythms with which they are constructed. Then we will be better prepared to hear the interplay between tone and rhythm, between register and temporality, and between the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of language.

Spoken language is, of course, not subject to the same metrical constraints as is music. While music depends foundationally on the repetition of its "lexical" items, language reserves repetition for special rhetorical effect. And while there is little doubt that language constitutes a system of communication, music has not yet been shown to have the same communicative properties. The fact, though, that the distinction between language and music seems categorical should not imply that the domains of language and music are firm in the Northern Ewe imagination. On the contrary, hearing or overhearing the music in language enables a better understanding of language as a source and resource for musical composition. Later on, when we discuss the language in music, we will see how the play element of music distances it from language. The dual perspective is crucial in order to ensure that we do not undercomplicate the dynamics of Northern Ewe expressive modes.

Language in motion: greeting

At the base of much Northern Ewe speech is the idea of *performance*. Speech acts are regularly performed in ways that imply a more than casual awareness of the importance and force of stylized speech. The context of performance, the intentions of speakers, the audience's reception: these and other factors affect the

nature of the performance. The purpose of this second half of the chapter is to discuss some of the temporal constraints operative on selected Northern Ewe speech acts. We will consider four such acts: greeting, announcing, riddling, and praying. Although word rhythm will continue to guide the overall assessment of language rhythm, our concerns will extend to broader issues of custom, meaning, and moral philosophy.

From a very early age, Northern Ewe learn to greet one another. Different greeting formulas are used at different times of day to renew, consolidate, or sometimes initiate relationships. Unlike the monosyllabic "Hi!" in North America, Northern Ewe greetings involve an exchange of several phrases. Children greeting their parents in the mornings, wives their husbands, neighbors each other: these and other greetings proceed conventionally. Greetings change with the time of day and with how long it has been since greetings were last exchanged. In traditional Northern Ewe society, the exchange of greetings is obligatory rather than optional. Except under specified conditions (such as if you are on your way to the latrine), you may not pass someone without greeting him or her.[8]

Consider the following morning greeting used by the Akpafu (A and B are two individuals, and numbers indicate successive utterances):

A1:	Lò yá mi	I greet you.
B1:	Mi rɛ kpoo?	Did you sleep peacefully?
A2:	Màbi 'rɛɛ?	Did the children sleep?
B2:	Imɔ́ rɛɛ?	Did yours sleep?
A3:	Ku mi kɔmá kárábrá	For your work yesterday (we thank you).
B3:	Ku mi 'kpɛ	For yours (we thank you).

A1 establishes contact, thus functioning as a phatic sign. B1 responds by inquiring about the previous night's sleep. A2 both answers B1 in the affirmative – although the actual word for "yes" has been suppressed – and returns B's concern by inquiring after B's children. B2 in turn inquires after A's children. Finally A3 thanks B for favors done the previous day. B3 returns the gratitude.

This basic structure may be embellished in different ways. A person might repeat his initial greeting by adding the intensifier "oo" to A1 in order to emphasize the greeting: "Lò yá mi oo, lò yá mî." This could happen if A and B are some distance apart (say, two or three houses) or if one simply wished to enjoy the opportunity for contact provided by this ritual. These greetings are formulaic, of course, so they are enacted with differing degrees of authenticity or sincerity. Where past favors are acknowledged (A3 and B3), the word "igɔ" ("the day before yesterday") may be substituted for "kɔmá" ("yesterday"). This is a convenient way of acknowledging favors done in the recent past rather than specifically two days earlier. This ritual is important because cooperation is very highly valued by the Akpafu. The kind of communal living in which people give

others food or lend them money or help them to weed their farms makes it improper to overlook this aspect of the greeting.

The music of this Akpafu greeting stems from its formulaic nature. Through repetition of the entire pattern, and through several internal repetitions, greetings acquire a sense of periodicity. Thus, since A1, B1, A2, and B2 each consists of three roughly equidistant syllables, the first part of this greeting acquires a rhythmic feel. It is but a small step from here to the metronomic character of music.

Another important addition to the above basic structure concerns death and mourning. It is customary, especially if one has been away from Akpafu for a while, to ask about the act of mourning the dead:

A1:	Arɛ ku kakúu?	Are you well with mourning?
B1:	Arɛ ku fɔ 'kpɛɛ?	Are you well with yours?

So prevalent is death, and so strong is belief in a life after death, that the reference to death, far from being a token or empty sign, is a way of acknowledging that those at "home" have fulfilled the entire community's (or clan's or home's) responsibility by properly putting away the dead. The user is not necessarily referring to a known death but to all deaths that might have occurred since his last visit. Sometimes the phrase "Mire ku ikpladzaa" ("Did you sleep with the wake-keeping?") is used to inquire after a wake kept the night before – another way of acknowledging communal responsibility for our dead.

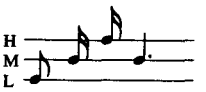
The transcription in Example 2.1 is an Akpafu greeting that may serve as a last illustration of the sound and structure of Northern Ewe greeting patterns. (Proceed from the top to the bottom of the left column followed by the right column.) The context of the greeting might be something like this. Person A has arrived from the city, where he works, to attend the burial of a close relative who had died a few days earlier. Person B is his host and head of A's family. After a drink of cold water, and in the presence not only of B but of other members of the home, A begins the formal greeting shown in the example. The text of this greeting includes speech tone and speech rhythm as an invitation to readers to try and perform the greeting. There is no substitute for such an attempt. Obviously the speed of delivery (and hence the durations of individual segments), the choice of registral positions (high, mid, and low), and the points chosen for emphasis will vary with individual speakers. The idea behind this transcription is not, therefore, to show a fixed pattern in the temporal and rhythmic structure of this Akpafu greeting, but to sketch a sonic structure that might be useful in assessing individual enactments of the greeting.

Language in motion: a town crier's announcement

Town criers continue to play the role of messenger for various people in authority: chiefs, queen mothers, group leaders, clan heads, and elders. Although the

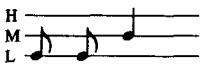
I greet you!

Lo ya mi oo!



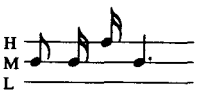
Did people sleep peacefully?

Ma trui ɔ - rɛɛ?



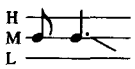
Did you sleep?

A rɛ oo?



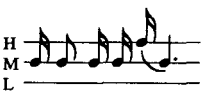
Did yours sleep?

I mɔ‿ɔ - rɛɛ?



We slept!

Bo rɛ oo!

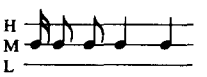


Are you well with mourning?

Mi rɛ ku ka-ku_?

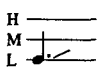
Did you sleep peacefully?

Mi rɛ kpoo?



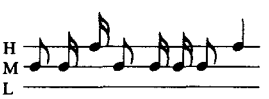
Are you with yours?

A rɛ ku fɔ 'kpɛɛ?



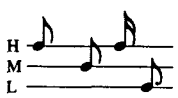
Yes!

Ee!



You are doing the work here!

Mi ndo n - gbe ka-ra-bra lo!

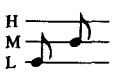


How is where you are coming from?

Mmɔ se ku-ra?

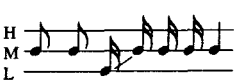
You are!

Mi ndo lo!



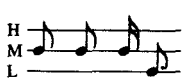
It is fine!

i - se!



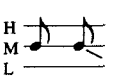
You are doing the work at home!

Mi ndo kaa_ ka-ra-bra!



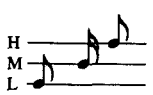
How is where I am coming from?

ŋgbe se ku-ra?



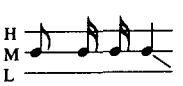
You are!

Mi - ndo!



It is fine!

i se lo!



You are welcome!

Ku mi‿ɔ se!

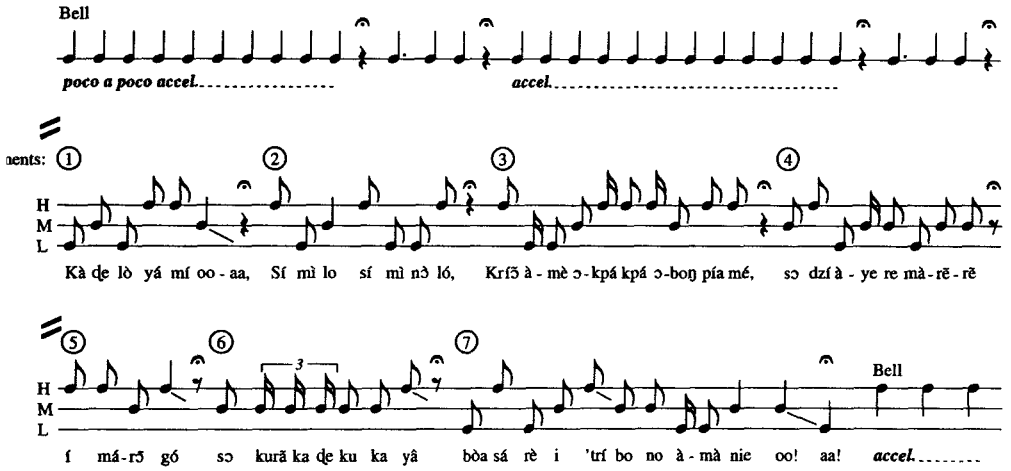
Example 2.1. Rhythmic and tonal structure of an Akpafu greeting

incidence in urban contexts of this form of outdoor proclamation has been partly eroded by modern means of communication, the practice is still heard in the more traditional and older sections of big cities as well as in rural areas. A call to manual labor, the onset of war, the announcement of a death, the setting up of a law or prohibition, or the invitation to a meeting: these are the sorts of things that a town crier announces. In Akpafu, for example, the town crier may be heard in the early evening when most people are back from their farms, and when the sound of his voice is likely to carry. As soon as the town crier's bell is sounded, everyone is required to give him full attention.

The principles behind the organization of an announcement resemble those that constrain the use of drums as speech surrogates. Both modes of communication operate in an aural mode, and both involve the dissemination in coded form of specific verbal messages. But there are differences as well. While drums transmit messages across greater distances (for example, from one village to the next), the town crier can only reach a section of the village at any one time. (No human being has yet been endowed with a voice that has the carrying power of a talking drum.) That is why the town crier typically repeats his announcement in three or four different locations within the town or village. Moreover, a message on the talking drum is subject to more intricate coding than that of a town crier. Since drums can only reproduce the tonal and rhythmic patterns of speech, they must rely on "phatic" elements (noise killers, abbreviations, attention callers) to convey a message. The town crier, on the other hand, speaks in ordinary language, albeit one that is performed, and hence not so ordinary. So while it takes some skill to decode a talking-drum message, it takes only an understanding of the language to decode a town crier's announcement.

Example 2.2 (CD track 4) is a transcription of an Akpafu town crier's announcement. Two instruments are used in this performance. The first is, of course, the announcer's voice; the second is a bell with a loud and piercing sound, the same bell that functions as the "heartbeat" of Ewe drum ensembles. This particular performance begins with the striking of the bell ten times, the strokes accelerating towards the end. Then, after a brief pause, the bell is struck three more times, followed by another pause. It is then struck twelve times and then – after a pause – three more times. The spoken announcement follows, after which the bell is struck three more times to signal closure.

There is nothing sacred about the pattern 10 + 3 + 12 + 3. What is important is the rhetorical use of silence to arrest listeners' attention. One is reminded of the Akpafu funeral dirge, in which silences between sung phrases serve to focus reflection on the particular death being mourned. Here, however, silence is meant to elicit silence, not verbal expression. Performed in seven brief and nearly equal time segments, the spoken part of the announcement acquires a periodicity stricter than that of normal speech. Let us consider each of the seven segments.



Example 2.2. Rhythmic and tonal structure of Akpafu town crier's announcement

Segment 1. "Townspeople, I greet you." Greeting the people is obviously a courtesy. It establishes contact and with it authority. The long vowels "oo" and "aa" at the end of the greeting not only add to the "noise level" of the announcement but mirror a vocal cadence in their descending contour. Although the euphonious "oo/aa" cannot, of course, compete with twenty-eight bell strokes in arousing attention, the fact that this opening segment is essentially without content gives listeners one last chance to listen to this message. The greeting is also enough to indicate who is making the announcement on this occasion and to engender speculation about what it might be about.

Segment 2. "Be quiet and listen." The town crier checks his contact to make sure it is working. Because the sense of this phrase is open rather than closed, the segment further arouses expectation for continuation. Again the marker "ló," with its high tone, contributes to the open effect.

Segment 3. "The elder (chief) has just sent me." The town crier is acting on behalf of the chief, to whom all townspeople owe allegiance. With this third segment, a pattern emerges: the announcement will be delivered in short segments. The reason is partly because this is as much as the speaker can manage physically (he needs to take deep breaths between phrases in order to be able to maintain a maximum decibel level) and partly because only in such digestible segments can the message be fully understood.

Segment 4. "That I should tell the men."

Segment 5. "And the women." Segments 4 and 5 identify the addressees of the message as adult men and women. Although everyone must attend to the addresser's call, not everyone will need to act upon it. Children, for example, are excluded from this particular message.

Segment 6. "That tomorrow morning." The mention of a specific time in the future accelerates the dynamism of the message. Up until now, there has been relatively little "content."

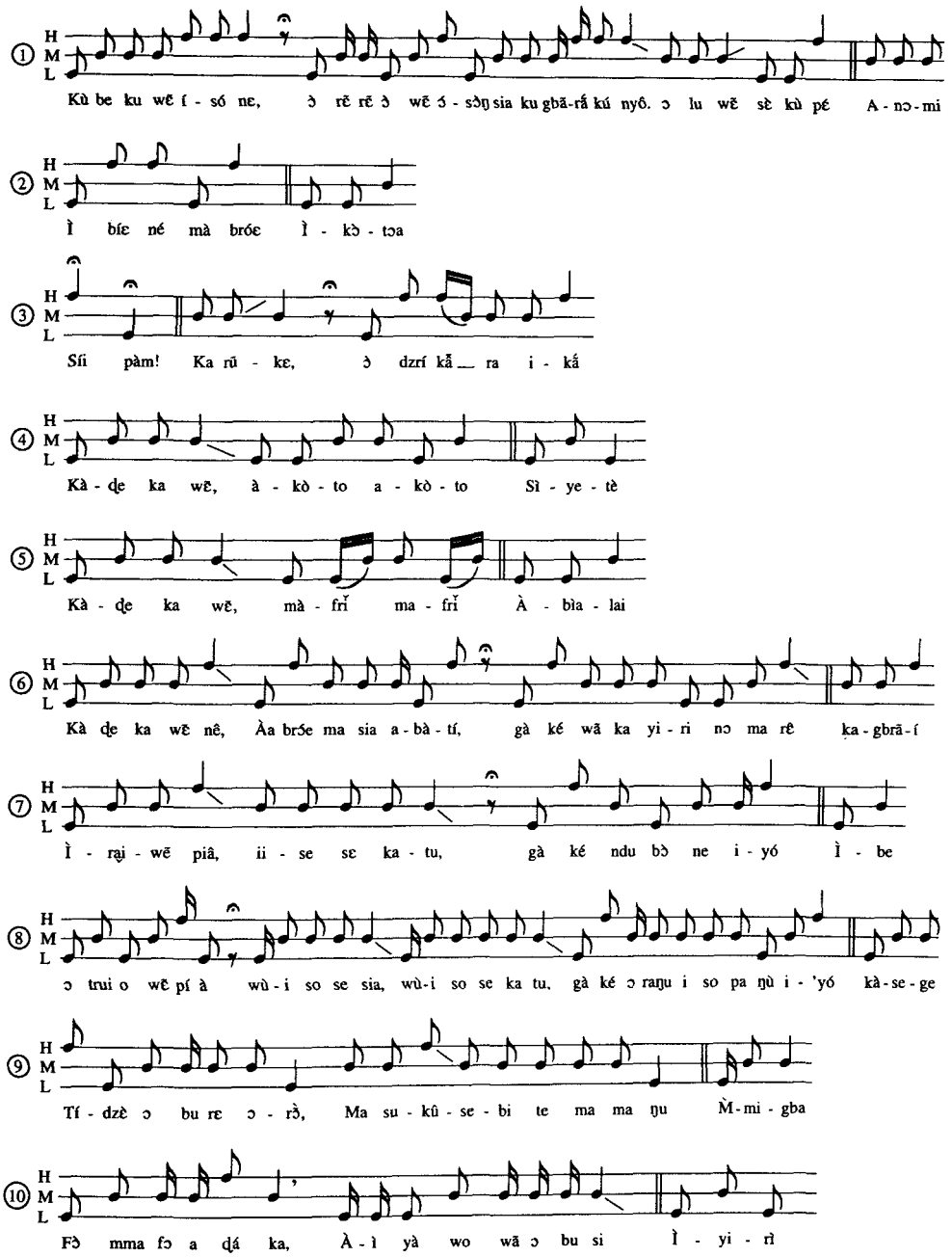
Segment 7. "We shall all gather at the village center to hear the news." In this, the most important statement in the entire announcement, we are finally told what sort of action is expected from men and women. This, then, is a message about a future message.

Although the town crier "speaks" his message, the announcement crosses the divide between language and music in the direction of the latter. In its use of intensifiers, and in its temporal unfolding in segments of comparable length, the announcement replaces the asymmetry of normal speech with the symmetry of music. The Akpafu do not, of course, say that the town crier "sings" his announcement, or that a lead singer "sings" a funeral dirge. They speak rather of "saying" announcements and dirges. However, the absence of an articulated distinction between these genres must not hide the more palpable distinction between speech that obeys emergent metrical constraints and speech that does not. It may even be – and some Ewe poets would corroborate this view – that the power of performed speech derives in part from its "unnatural" reliance on something like a tactus.

Language in motion: riddling

Riddles are performed as part of (mainly) children's recreation and informal education. Although riddling rarely constitutes an entire evening's recreational activity, it often forms an indispensable adjunct to story-telling sessions. A riddle typically embodies a paradox or contradiction that, however, has a logical basis. The task of the decoder is to disambiguate this paradox. Often this involves transposing sets of terms from one domain of experience into another. Northern Ewe riddles therefore principally teach reasoning by analogy. In addition they provide children with numerous and unique opportunities to *play with knowledge*. Made and renewed in the tradition of oral poetry, riddles know few limits in the subjects they may encompass or in the themes they may develop. This is not, however, to deny the obvious fact that the point of departure for the composer of riddles remains the experiential and cognitive constraints imposed on a member of Northern Ewe society. Teachers and school children, husbands and wives, wives and co-wives, rural and urban lives, various parts of the human anatomy, sanitary habits (especially those involving trips to the latrine), plant and animal life, hunger, prosperity, beauty, hard work: these and many other subjects are thematized in Northern Ewe riddles.

The ten Akpafu riddles transcribed in Example 2.3 will provide a focus for our discussion of the temporal constraints that govern the performance of riddles. Below are the texts of the riddles. Solutions are given in boldface.



Example 2.3. Rhythmic and tonal structure of ten Akpafu riddles

1

Kùbe kuwẽ ísò ne	On a certain mountain
Ɔrerẽ ɔwẽ ɔ́sɔ̀n sia kugbarã́ kú nyó	A certain man planted two heads of sugarcane
Ɔlu'wẽ sè kùpɛ́	They go off at the same time
Anɔmi	**Eyes**

2

Ìbíɛ né màbrɔ́e	As it is breaking they are coming out
Ikɔtɔá	**Groundnut**

3

Sii pam!	Sii pam!
Karu 'kɛ,	**The earth split**
Ɔ̀dzríkãra ikã	**The needle cannot sew it**

4

Kaḍe kawẽ, àkòto akoto	A certain land, hats and hats
Sìyetè	**Black berries**

5

Kàḍe kawẽ, mafri mafri	In a certain land, red-haired people
Àbìalai	**Yellow berries**

6

Kaḍe kawẽ nê	In a certain land
Aabrɔ́e masia abatí	You get there and find that beds have been made
Gàké wã kayirìnɔ̀ marɛ̂	But under the beds is where the people are sleeping
Kugbarãí	**Sugarcane plantation**

7

Ìra iwẽ pía	There is something
Iise sɛ katu	It never goes to the river
Gàké ṇdu 'bɔ̀ ne iyó	But it always has plenty of water at home
Ibɛ̂	**Coconut**

8

Ɔtrui ɔwẽ pía	Somebody exists
Wui so sɛ sia	S/he never goes to the farm
Wui so sɛ katu	S/he never goes to the river
Gàké ɔranu i so paṇu i iyó	But s/he is never short of flour
Kasege	**Fireplace**

9

Tídzɛ ɔburɛ ɔrɔ̃	The teacher has fallen down
Masukusebi tamamanù	The pupils are laughing at him/her
Mmigba	**A pile of shit (with flies on it)**

10

Fɔ mma fɔ aḍáka	You have your own box
Aiya wo wã ɔ́búsî	You cannot open it
Iyirì	**Stomach**

Unlike folktales, riddles exploit a synchronic rather than diachronic temporal mode. In other words, a riddle typically describes a set of existing conditions using the present continuous or simple present tense. It does not normally include a narrative that draws on a series of contiguous events. One obvious reason for this difference is that riddles and their solutions are typically one-sentence and one-word affairs respectively. The brevity and quick turnover enhance the competitive element in riddling and encourage children to think quickly on their feet. Although competition does not necessarily lead to an explicit ranking or to an award of prizes, it allows imaginative and quick-witted children to display, or in some cases discover, their gifts.

The rhythmic and tonal structures of each riddle show that here, too, the mode of articulation is entirely syllabic, and that economy in the construction of an enigma is highly valued. As in the town crier's announcement, and as we will see in the prayers accompanying the pouring of libation, riddles are presented in short, manageable segments, conforming to breath groups. Utterances are comparable in temporal length, and a brief pause separates successive utterances. Thus, riddle 1 is delivered in four segments, riddles 6 and 7 in three, riddles 4, 5, 9, and 10 in two, and riddles 2 and 3 in one.

A typical performance situation might go something like this. A "narrator" establishes contact with the audience by invoking a formulaic opening ("Mìdzòlô!") to which the participants respond, also by use of a formula ("Abao!") The narrator then poses a riddle. One or more attempts are made to answer it. If the answer is wrong, the narrator says nothing. As soon as the correct answer emerges, another participant takes over the role of narrator, invokes the formula, waits for a response, and poses a riddle. If a riddle seems to be particularly difficult or obscure, the narrator must reveal the answer after several wrong attempts in order not to disrupt the rhythm of the session. Since not all riddles are challenging or interesting, the participants react with laughter, jeers, skepticism, or various noises of approval or disapproval according to their mood. It should be stressed that everyone present is expected to participate in this communal performance – which is not to deny differences in individual

ability. Some children know more riddles than others, some have a better grasp of the principles of decoding riddles, and some are spontaneous and ingenious composers of riddles. Although it may be preceded by a period of reflection, riddle composition takes place in performance. While this may represent nothing more than an "outdooring" of a new riddle – the composing having been done earlier – the evidence of some other Northern Ewe expressive modes suggests that the distinction between performances and rehearsals is neither firm nor categorical.

What is said in Akpafu riddles (including how it is said) provides a window onto traditional education. Briefly, riddles 1 and 10 are lessons in human physiology (the eyes and the stomach respectively). Riddle 2 is a lesson in crop science, while riddle 3 uses non-lexical items to teach seismology. Riddles 4, 5, and 6 teach plant physiology while riddles 7 and 8 give instruction on domestic chores. Riddle 9 concretizes a deplorable but not unfamiliar sight. There are of course hundreds of such riddles about, and their structure and content do not necessarily reflect the institutional labels that I have given to these ten. In any case they form part of the diversity of Northern Ewe expressive cultures and offer a glimpse into Northern Ewe ways of performing speech.

Language in motion: pouring libation

Pouring libation is one of the oldest and most popular Northern Ewe rituals. In practically every town and village, libation is poured several times a day by people belonging to different segments of the society to mark a wide variety of occasions. Libation is poured to initiate an activity (such as a gathering of elders and chiefs), to celebrate good news (such as a woman's successful delivery of a child), and to welcome visitors. Meetings of traditional courts may begin with the pouring of libation, while some recreational groups pray before they begin to drum and dance. It is by these practices that the Northern Ewe may be described as a "religious" people. Although pouring libation is an unmistakable sign of a pre-colonial Ewe practice, it has been modified and adapted to the changing needs of post-colonial society. In addition to palm wine and *akpeteshie* (a locally brewed, severely potent gin) we now have gin and Schnapps; in addition to calabashes we have drinking glasses; and in addition to pouring the liquid on the bare ground, we may now use a bowl instead (especially if the floor of the house is carpeted). So while the content, method of delivery, occasion, and other aspects of this practice bear the traces of a modern Ewe society, there is no relinquishing an ultimate grounding in those deep and timeless Ewe values that feature in Ewe constructions of their own reality. It is particularly interesting that despite the pervasive influence of Christian culture and religion, most Northern Ewe move easily and comfortably between the two worlds: traditional African religion and Christian religion.

Although prayers accompanying the pouring of libation may assume different forms, there is a recognizable deep structure that constrains most of them. This structure has four contiguous parts, which also confer a certain periodicity on the prayer as a whole: the invocation of gods and ancestors; the prayer proper; the curse; and the blessing.

The invocation of gods and ancestors. A libation begins with the solemn acknowledgment that others have passed before us, and that, although they now live "on the other side of the river," they continue to exert a far from negligible influence on what we do. It is therefore with awe and respect that the departed are remembered. Among those remembered are chiefs and sub-chiefs, clan leaders, elders, and legendary figures. One prayer I heard in the village of Zìaví began with a long rehearsal of the genealogy of Zìaví chiefs, reaching back some two hundred years. In other Northern Ewe prayers, "the man who first brought 'school' to this village," "he who stood up to the white man," and "he who owned the first grinding mill" are among the historical figures whose names are permanently inscribed in oral records.

The extent of the invocation is partly a function of the speaker's erudition and partly a function of the grandness of the occasion. A chief's spokesperson, for example, part of whose normal duty is to pour libation on formal, semi-formal, or informal occasions, is likely to have committed to memory a significant chunk of a village's genealogy. An ordinary head of a household, on the other hand, may not be as knowledgeable, able only to recollect the principal names on that list. If a gathering is modest, such as a welcome to just-arrived visitors in one's home, the head of the house will pray a correspondingly modest prayer. By contrast, on large state occasions such as festivals or durbars of chiefs, prayers may be long, long-winded and involved, since "culture" is being self-consciously displayed.

An important aspect of the attitudes to the invocation in particular, and to the prayer as a whole, is the sense of responsibility assumed by participants. Pouring libation is considered a communal responsibility, not an individual one. While the voice doing the narrating may be one person's, the "narrative voice" is a compound one. Should the narrator forget to mention an important ancestor's name, or forget to indicate an indispensable attribute of a god, one or more participants quickly remind him of it. The belief is that, if any retributions should result from such memory lapses, they will be directed at the entire community, not just at the person praying. It is therefore the group's responsibility to forestall such retribution.

The temporal structure of the invocation reflects the functions attributed to it: it is segmented or chopped up, and acquires a periodicity similar to that operative in any performance of a list of names and attributes.

The prayer proper. It is in this section of the prayer that the narrator tells the ancestors why they are being called upon. A common narrative strategy is to begin by using one or more exclusionary phrases. For example, "it is not for anything bad that we have called upon you this morning." The narrator then contextualizes the occasion by recounting the events leading up to it. This section of the prayer relies on a judicious use of metaphor, proverbs, and wise sayings. These sayings are in turn legitimized by an appeal to commonality or authority: "the elders say," or "our people say," or "it is often said that . . .". It is here that the narrator displays his knowledge of Ewe philosophy and culture. He couches his requests in a rich language not only for the benefit of the ancestors and gods who speak "old Ewe" or "old Siwu," but for the delight of other participants.

It is often the case that what is sought is no more than guidance, permission, or blessing from the gods. During fieldwork in 1986, when I would ask to see performances of certain sacred musics (such as Àɖàbàtràm) out of a ritual context, the prayers that preceded such performances always told the gods that we were not "really calling" them but just "learning." They should therefore exercise restraint in engineering the incidence of altered states and possession among the dancers. Our aim, the prayer made clear, was neither to remind them (and us) of past, tragic occurrences nor to warn of non-existent dangers.

Unlike the invocation, the temporal structure of the prayer proper more nearly approximates the pace of ordinary language than poetic language. In other words, poetic devices are used to produce a non-poetic discourse. There is some room for improvisation in this section of the prayer.

The curse. Northern Ewe religious philosophy recognizes the existence of good and evil, of forces that promote the well-being of their people, and of those that seek to disrupt such well-being. An important part of the prayer, then, is to seek protection from the forces of destruction. These include not only the departed and invisible members of the community (such as those who "died bad deaths" and were either burned or buried outside the normal cemeteries) but also anyone present who harbors evil thoughts, who is jealous of another's success, or who seeks to do someone else in. The narrator metaphorically pours drink on the evil spirit's or evil person's head. To enhance his own credibility, the narrator begins by placing a curse on himself: "If I should seek to hurt or destroy so-and-so, let me die." Having thus put himself on the line, he can then go on to substitute "a member of the community" for "I." At this serious moment in the prayer, the Northern Ewe consolidate their belief in traditional religion, in the many things unknown, and in many others that lie beyond their control.

Because it depends on set phrases, the curse regains some of the periodicity of the invocation, and thus presents a contrast in temporal structure to the prayer proper.

The blessing. The prayer concludes with requests for blessing, often couched in explicitly formulaic expression. Wealth, health, and long life are regularly sought. "If we scratch leaves," an Akpafu prayer has it, "let them turn into cloth." Another says that "If our feet touch the sand, may it turn into money." The formulaic nature of these final invocations does not make the sentiments expressed any less deeply felt, or the desire for blessing any less authentic. One can never have enough of wealth, health, and long life.

The blessing is the most strictly periodic of the four sections of the prayer. The reason has to do with the more or less regulated delivery of formulaic blessings.

Although the prayer is narrated by an individual, aspects of its larger rhythmic structure are contributed by participants. Ululations reinforce the exposition of serious matters, energizing words add to the intensity of expression, and verbal interventions fill in gaps left by the narrator. Although on one level these are "added voices," they constitute, on another level, extensions of the single, communal voice.

The structure adduced for Northern Ewe prayers is, of course, something of an abstraction from several practices, an idealization of practice even. It is necessary, therefore, to supplement the foregoing discussion with a look at specific prayers prayed on specific occasions. I have chosen two such prayers for discussion.

Example 2.4 (CD track 5) contains a transcription of part of a prayer that was prayed in the village of Akpafu-Ɔdɔmi in July of 1986. I had asked to see and record aspects of Akpafu culture as enshrined in songs and dances. This was the prayer that signaled the official beginning of the display.

1 Óô, Ɔdɔmi makpakpa m'ɔɖúɖúu pléeplée loo rui maye bó YOHO
Óo, Odomi elders who have departed from us YOHO
2 Oo, Ɔ̀wa Ítí YOHO
Oo, grandfather Iti YOHO
3 Ɔ̀wa Atiti ŋɔ̃se YOHO
Grandfather Atiti's father YOHO
4 Brɔfó Edù YOHO
Brofo Edu YOHO
5 Opanyí YOHO
Opanyi YOHO
6 Ifám YOHO
Ifam YOHO
7 Mi ɔɖuɖuu plepleeple YWE
Every single one of you YWE
8 Mibá mia fɔ ndã mìnɛ̀ YOHO
Come and take this drink and drink it YOHO
9 Ǐbá ikpí YOHO
It is not because of death YOHO

10 Ɔso ńtòbò kprê mi kú kákɔme gá ngbé YOHO *Ngbã ku awale iśó!*
That we are calling you this afternoon YOHO *Life and prosperity!*
11 Bo manyĭ mâ bia, masua ara YOHO
Our relatives who are there, and are learning YOHO
12 Màtamàkí ne YOHO
They are traveling around YOHO
13 Bo "bi ɔwê YOHO
One of our own children YOHO
14 Gɔ́ nne bó Máwú i Tódzí i kato 'bi YOHO
Who is a child of our relatives in Todzi at the top of the hill YOHO
15 Ɔsɔ piai abrokyéré YOHO
He is living abroad YOHO
16 Ɔto nya ará, ɔto nɔ ará YOHO
He is seeing things, he is hearing things YOHO
17 Ne ngbé gɔ́ opia matrui sɔɔ, ɔ ngbé gɔ́ ɔsè nê màbá maa nyo boaɖe YOHO
And the people where he is said, he too where he is from they
want to come and see our home YOHO
18 Màs̆ua bo kurabrarà YWE
Learn our customs YWE
19 Ku bo ikaɖé YOHO
And our ways of speaking YOHO
20 Ku boa lá maklegu m'aaɖe AHA *Ngbã ku awale ísó ló!*
And take it back to their country AHA *Life and prosperity!*
21 Ne mába ne YOHO
So they came YOHO
22 Igɔ ayi wá maba ne YOHO
The recent days when they came YOHO
23 Biele, ibra kpàtà YOHO
Truly, it was very sudden YOHO
24 Tee ara wá bóa wó bra koraa tee boabrá wã ido ngbɔ YOHO
For the things we could have done, we could have done them better YOHO
25 Nɔsoo mi, kafrâ, màkpise má boɔkpree ne, YWE
So you, kafra, the dead upon whom we have called YWE
26 Mìfɔ̀ ìbiaraa mitãbo YOHO
Accept all this for us YOHO
27 Sɔ isiɔ nteboɖe YOHO
That we are rejoicing YOHO
28 Sí amane ira irere tóbò brá YWE
If we are doing a custom YWE
29 Fie íre mi ire kúere ne AHA
And it resembles one of your old customs AHA

30 Sí bònà ne bònɔ̀ YOHO
Let us be able to hear it YOHO
31 Maũ sí mana ne manya NHU
They too let them be able to see it NHU
32 Sɔ ee, ɔwiɔ ne ngbɔ ise nee YOHO
That in the olden days that is how things were YOHO
33 Fie iyi ɔ̂ba kriɔ ne NHU *Ngbã̀ ku awale ísó ló!*
And the world is now like this NHU *Life and prosperity!*
34 Nɔso nne ɔdudu pleeple YOHO.
So everything YOHO.

Example 2.4. An opening prayer from Akpafu-Ɔdɔmi

Four people perform this prayer. First and most important is the chief's linguist, who prays the main words of the prayer. Second is a conarrator, also part of the royal entourage, whose task is to "hear" what is being prayed on its way to the gods and ancestors and to participants. His contribution is confined to periodic shouts of "Yoho!", "Ywe!", "Aha!", and "Nhu!", words of no semantic value, exploited here principally for their acoustical properties (which is not to deny that they take on contextual meanings as affirmations – "yes," "truly," and so on). Then there are two women who squat on either side of the linguist and who function as conarrators. They provide a metronomic hand clap to accompany the prayer (starting at line 10 in the transcription), and they also reinforce what is being prayed by shouting out slogans, words of encouragement, and calls for blessing (lines 20 and 33).

How, then, does this prayer work as a temporal structure? The prayer divides into three parts: an opening section in which gods and ancestors are called upon by name and offered a ritual drink (lines 1–8); a main narrative in which the reason for the gathering is revealed (lines 9–24); and a third section in which specific sorts of help are sought from the ancestors (lines 25–34). (The rest of the prayer, which includes a formulaic curse and blessings, has been omitted in the interests of brevity.) The hand clap marks a pulse, and so creates for us the experience of poetic or artistic time as distinct from ordinary, lived time. Functioning in opposition to the clap is the rhythm of the narration proper, which carves out an asymmetrical division of time into units of varying lengths. These are not rigid, metrically grounded units, but expanding and contracting sense units such as we hear and use in ordinary conversation. The series of shouts, "Yoho!", "Ywe!", and "Aha!", serve to reinforce the narrator's segments. At the same time, and in view of their timbral and articulative prominence, they mediate – and this only partially – between the ordinary time created by the narrator's periods and the poetic time created by the hand clap. Finally, the women's interjections, "It is the good we are after" and "on life and prosperity," recur in a magnified periodic

frame, a hand clap writ large, if you like, in specific response to the sense of the narrator's words. What we have, then, is a complex of coordinated functions. They allow an exertion of independence within a larger, regulated process. This is *simultaneous doing* of the sort that lies at the heart of other Northern Ewe expressive forms such as group singing and drum ensemble performance.

The second prayer (see Example 2.5, CD track 6) presents a contrast to the previous one in that, except for the Prayer Proper section, it is delivered almost entirely in a strict, almost metric periodicity. At the close of the performance whose opening prayer we have just analyzed, a pot of palm wine and several bottles of Schnapps were made available to the chief, elders, and leaders of various performing groups. Then an elder prayed a closing prayer, after which a "younger elder" prayed a second closing prayer.

1 Káɖe misɛ oo aa
2 Misi ku ngbâ?
3 Misi ku awalê?
4 Bo idi kaɖe
5 Kaɖe 'di bo
6 Bòsú mágbré
7 Bòsú másáà
8 Bo fe alawo
9 Bò kpésé àlàwo
10 Bo iɖe makprê
11 Bo sɛ dūu
12 Bò tá dūu
13 Dzé mábɔ kamɔ́
14 Makpésé gu sirɔ̃́
15 Bo kú ítì
16 Màlale ku ikú
17 Bo sá krá
18 Bo tra kra
19 Bo karinyá sásásá

20 Ã, igɔ ame kree bosî
21 Bokɔse Agawu-Kakraba ɔ bɔ kɔ ɔrɔ̃gô
22 Maye 'bi
23 Sɔ ɔwí gɔ́ ame apia ne wɔ̃ ira sámà brá ne~
24 Nɔ so ɔwí gɔ́ ame máye ŋu sùkú 'sáma se
25 Maba ma su 'bi mapia sùkû
26 Kò ɔ̀ko 'bɔŋ taŋu 'ri
27 Ɔ sɛ̀ sùkú klɛ màbròni aɖe

28 Ne ɔ́bo mɔ̂ ne
29 Sɔ kàmà híã̄ bo kurabrarà
30 Ɔ̀ ne ɔ́tre ɔbɔŋ tu bó ne
31 Sɔ ɔ̀ ire íiba yó ìbó
32 Ne ɔso bò búai ŋu
33 Ɔ̀biara kɛkɛ ɔfɔ̀ ne nrɔ̀ mínyɔ̂
34 Masu masia i nomé nêgbé ísó
35 Maba ma bo
36 Mɔ brá nwá mâ wó brá
37 Ɔ̀bi gɔ́ àmè tàtàatà lo nyà ɔ̀ko fie ɔ́klɛ̀ ɔ̀were kámâ
38 Dzé ɔ́bo i ipo ámé
39 Siyú 'taŋu 'ri
40 Ikurá taŋu 'ri
41 Ɔ̀biara kɛkɛ gɔ́ másun mapia i arɔ̀e áme
42 sɔ ɔbuá ŋù sí bò bra àdzúmá wá ngbe
43 Fíe ɔ́su ira i neiso
44 Dzé ɔ́bo i ipo ámé
45 Siyú 'tanu 'ri
46 Ikurá 'taŋu 'ri
47 Dzé ɔ́bo i ipo ámé
48 Ɔ́moe ɔsebu
49 Ɔ̀kpésé sìkã̄
50 Ɔ̀ɖé
51 Ɔ̀kútí ɔ̀tábó
52 Ɔ́gbãri iyatà
53 Àkpésé sìkàti
54 Ɔ̀fuso
55 Ɔ́kútí ɔ̀tábó
56 Ngbã̄ iso
57 Awalɛ ísó
58 Boɖée
59 Bò fróe sìnyatu
60 Bo nɛɛ
61 Bò fróe sìnyatu
62 Fútútú
63 Gòglò
64 Bò pé í kátȭ
65 Bò kútí bò pɛ i kágbègbè
66 Mìsekpri!
67 Mìsekpri!

Example 2.5. A closing prayer from Akpafu-Ɔdɔmi

Here we encounter Akpafu oral poetry at its most vivid. Two factors contribute to this. First, the lines are short and comparable in length, and although there is no necessary rhyme scheme at work, there is a strict periodic structure that regulates the utterances. The participants' punctuation, which marks each line or breath group, makes the periodic structure explicit. Second, the prayer exploits a series of binary oppositions in both sound and meaning. Thus lines 6–7, 8–9, and 11–12 are paired by recurring words or sounds and their attendant meanings, while lines 59–60 and 61–62 form question–answer pairs. This play with language has a rhythm of its own that contributes to the overall rhythmic structure.

The outer structure of the prayer conforms to the general pattern described above. The invocation (lines 1–19) is used not to invoke the presence of the gods (they have been present all along), but to celebrate the people of Ɔdɔmi in poetic language. Lines 20–37, the prayer proper, provide a background to the occasion. (I am mentioned, as is my "return for cultural knowledge.") The call for blessing begins at line 38 and trots out the usual string of desired blessings. For example, "If he or any of the people who have made this occasion successful should enter the bush, let thorns or dangerous plants break aside for him."

Rich in its use of metaphor, wise sayings, and "old Siwu" words, and in its exploitation of the sound of the Siwu language, this prayer suggests a self-conscious and stylized performance. It is one of the few Northern Ewe prayers that I have heard that departs systematically from the normal flow of speech and assumes a precise metric form. This is not to say that it is not an authentic prayer: it is as authentic as the people of Ɔdɔmi regard it. The narrator is obviously practiced at his art, and, as I learned from observers, is often called upon to display it on public occasions. Although this makes him something of a specialist – a specialist in prayers – he remains a specialist only to the extent that he has time outside his normal job as a school teacher.

And so we arrive at the limits of speech rhythm and on the threshold of musical rhythm. In this chapter, we have seen that lexical items display rhythmic patterning and that there is a frequent displacement between "stress accent" and "tone accent." We have also seen that when language is set in motion in the form of greeting, riddling, and pouring libation, it retains the rhythmic and tonal structure of individual words but acquires a second set of constraints based on periodicity. A crucial formative element of language is its latent musicality, which is manifest in the "song" of words and sentences and in the emerging metrical structure of poetic language. Language is turned into song when its latent musical elements are made patent, when the implicit becomes explicit, when the hidden becomes manifest. The rhythms of song will be the subject of our next chapter.

3

Rhythms of song

Singing is by far the most prevalent mode of musical expression among the Northern Ewe. Although there exist genres of "instrumental music," no such genre completely excludes song. The soundscape in Chapter 1 would already have suggested that, taken as a temporal whole, Northern Ewe society is rarely free of song. Many formal and informal activities are marked by singing, whether or not the occasion is designated a "musical occasion." Although there is a certain amount of private, solo singing, Northern Ewe regard singing as essentially a group activity, an opportunity to express once again their "communal ethos."[1]

It follows from the prevalence of singing that there are many different types of song. Some are specific to certain occasions while others are not. For example, funeral dirges or *Àvihawó* (lit. crying songs) are reserved for situations of mourning, just as a sacred drum music such as *Àɖàbàtràm* is beaten only on "serious" occasions – festival days or important funeral days. By contrast, the use of recreational songs is much less restricted. There are two major obstacles to a classification of Northern Ewe songs: firstly, not all the different types of song can be registered in an Ewe folk taxonomy ("lullaby" and "work song," for example, while common, are not verbally designated as such, although they *can* be given Ewe names); secondly, there is no obvious *musical* basis for distinguishing among song genres. A song of insult (*ameɳúha*), for example, might utilize the characteristics of a recreational song (*modzákáha*), just as some folktale interludes (*glìhàwó*) may be indistinguishable from funeral dirges (*àvihawó*). Although this creative mixture of musical genres may pose problems for those seeking one-to-one correlations between musical structure and social function, it will not surprise those who understand the complexities of "occasions" in Northern Eweland, and who are therefore sensitive to the celebratory element in a funeral, for example, or the serious aspect of a recreational dance.

I shall forego an attempt to develop a comprehensive system of classification of Northern Ewe songs (based on data drawn from a supposed folk taxonomy, musical features, and social function) for a more pragmatic division into songs in strict rhythm and songs in free rhythm. We begin at the beginning, so to speak, by looking at the nature of rhythmic expression of Northern Ewe children. We will then be better equipped to assess adult rhythmic language.

The musical language of Northern Ewe children

At the heart of the musical education of Northern Ewe children lie various modes of rhythmic signification involving speech, movement, and song. These rhythms are learned from other children or by imitating adults. Because traditional music-making is almost exclusively an outdoor affair – daily temperatures in the 70s and 80s are normal throughout the year, the only significant meteorological fact being the difference between rainy and dry seasons – children are exposed to a variety of musical activities from an early age. And the close connection between language and music ensures that language acquisition goes hand in hand with the acquisition of musical competence. The musical world of Northern Ewe children is diverse and extraordinarily dynamic, and we will turn to a handful of the products of that world presently, but we might mention here two of the most visible signs of musical interest: the first is the preoccupation with homemade instruments, and the second is the speed with which "foreign" musical products are imported by Northern Ewe children. There appears to be no limit on the ingenuity and creativity of Northern Ewe children when it comes to constructing musical instruments. Tin cans become membranophones with the help of stretched skin (such as a chicken's stomach), and pawpaw stalks are transformed into aerophones with the aid of an unsuspected reed: the web of a wall gecko. Thin pipes of bamboo are readily made into flutes, while large ones are ingeniously converted into a "string" instrument, a sort of one-string bamboo fiddle with two or more players. Stones, sticks, used metal strips, calabashes, and tree trunks: these and other objects are easily made into musical instruments. And as for the "importation" of music, Northern Ewe children seem particularly adept at taking over children's songs "belonging" to other ethnic groups. Rhymes and game songs heard on the radio or on cassette, seen in foreign films and videos, or brought to Northern Eweland by others: these are quickly appropriated and domesticized. The spontaneous identification with other music bespeaks a "universal" understanding at the same time as it suggests an intense and unmediated interest in the products of children's imagination elsewhere.

The most remarkable feature of Northern Ewe children's musical language is that it shows no conceptual difference from adult musical language. Syncopations,

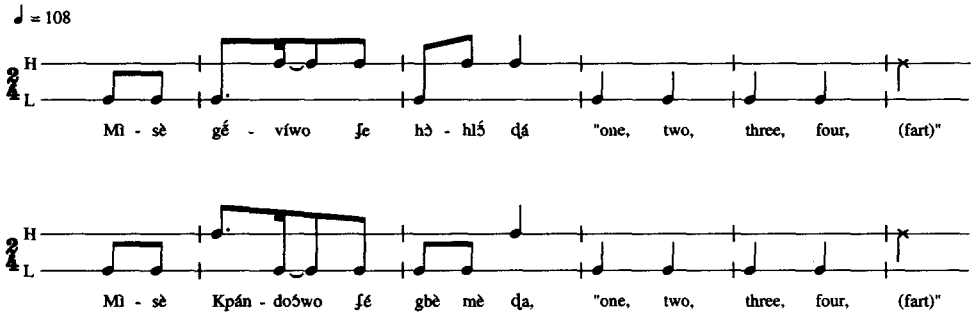
displaced beats, silent beats, cross-rhythms, compound "meters," asymmetrical time lines: these and other standard features of Ewe rhythm are readily identified in children's music. We cannot therefore speak of a straightforward progression from the "simple" rhythms of childhood to the "complex" rhythms of adulthood. The latter appear to be fully formed from the beginning. Of course, maturity and experience contribute to the development of performance sensibilities, and there is no question, for example, that some of the experiences coded in some adult songs, some of the intricate and labor-intensive performances of adult lead drummers, and some of the elegantly restrained movements of expert dancers may lie beyond the reach of children. Still, the conceptual basis of this expertise is already there in children's language.

How might we explain this absence of a complicating trajectory from childhood to adulthood, this absence of "development" in musical language, to put it less generously and more polemically? Since Northern Ewe musics exist mainly in an oral tradition, and given the limitations of human memory on the purely intellectual cultivation of certain aspects of the musical language, it is perhaps understandable that, historically as well as conceptually, the kinds of structural changes that may be recorded in Northern Ewe musical languages are not, by Western standards, especially extravagant ones. The West knows this in its folk and popular idioms, of course, and it is here that the comparison is most appropriate. When, however, writers are led to compare the "complexity" of a Beethoven symphony with that of an Ewe funeral dirge, suppressing the fact that the symphony is inconceivable outside a particular capitalist economy, then the comparison between "Western" and "African" music is strained and inappropriate. Far from providing ammunition for those who seek in African cultures evidence of a "primitive mentality," this acknowledgment of a certain stasis in the musical language of the Northern Ewe might serve to remind us of the extent to which the invention of writing, coupled with other technological advances, has made for a different trajectory in the West. In any case, childhood and adulthood are not separated by a firm boundary but are rather linked as in a continuum. And since the child's musical language is, at least in part, an imitation of adult language, it is more accurate to say that child and adult languages are locked in a dialectic in the production, revision, and consumption of musical ideas.[2]

Let us turn now to the products of the Northern Ewe children's imagination. In what follows, we shall look closely at three rhymes, focusing on their rhythmic structure.

Rhymes

Northern Ewe children never miss an opportunity to rhythmicize language. By rhythmicizing language, they defamiliarize it, pressing it towards the condition



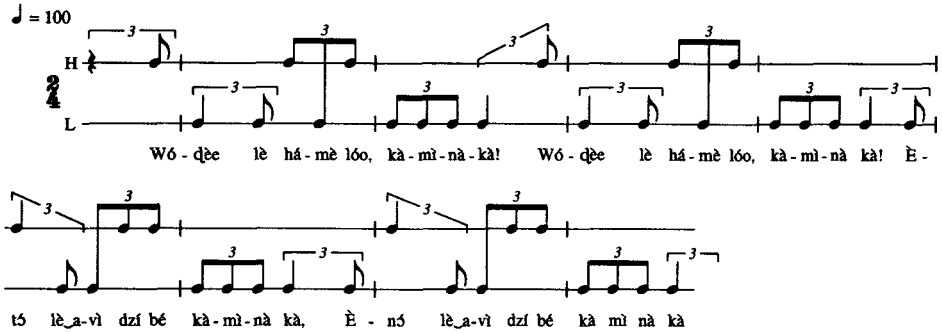
Example 3.1. Children's teasing rhyme

of music. Example 3.1 is a game in which children tease children from other towns or villages. "Listen to the sound of Accra children," says the text, and this is followed by counting out loud in English (1, 2, 3, 4), culminating in a fart. The idea is to let out the fart at a precise moment and in keeping with the prevailing rhythmic and metrical patterns – here the downbeat of bar 5. The game continues as long as children can think up names of other towns or villages (the variant shown in Example 3.1 makes fun of the people of Kpándŏ) and as long as they possess a supply of farts. Though brief, and not particularly elevated in subject-matter, this game illustrates a first principle of Northern Ewe rhythmic structure: off-beat phrasing. One cannot overemphasize the fact that in songs, as in drum ensemble music, phrases rarely begin on downbeats. Some listeners to African music are often thrown by the consistency with which, and extent to which, phrases suppress a normative strong beat pattern, originating and terminating elsewhere in the bar. Their instinct is to regard the first sound as the origin of whatever cycle of beats is operative in the music. Unfortunately, first sounds are often false friends.[3]

Although the utterance in Example 3.1 preserves the tone pattern and rhythms of spoken Ewe, it modifies them slightly to make the phrase more musically memorable. Note how the high tones in the first and second bars demand an agogic accent even though they occur in metrically weak places. The result is a contradiction between speech tone and meter. Note also the syncopated figure in the first full bar, which occurs frequently as a sort of stylistic imprint in Ghanaian music generally, especially in its popular idioms such as highlife. Interestingly this figure is not one of the *figurae* available in spoken Ewe. Its appeal appears to be "purely musical."[4]

Among the lessons imparted by this little rhyme are a sense of pride in the local community, the symbolic value of a fart, the ability to hold one until the right moment, names of other towns and villages, the ability to count at least up to four in English, and the appropriateness of mixing the Ewe and English languages.

Example 3.2 is a spoken rhyme used to tease a child who for one reason or other has been "removed" from a peer group. To rub it in, the child's father and

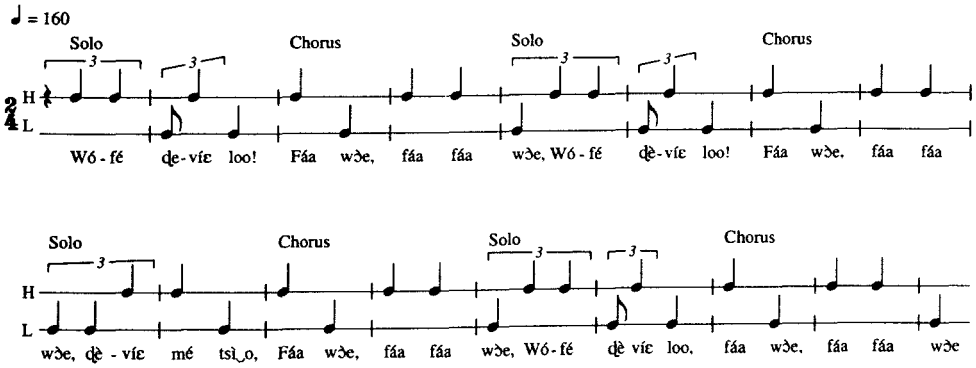


Example 3.2. Children's teasing rhyme

mother are said to be crying as a result of this excommunication. Of special significance to the rhythmic structure of the rhyme is the recurring word "kàmìnàkà," a "rhyme word" or "song word," used for its articulative rather than semantic value. The rhyme as a whole has the usual paratactic structure, which is to say that it is structurally open. Children are required to make up phrases on the models of "They have removed him from company" and "The father is crying 'kàmìnàkà'" to fit the prevailing rhythmic and metrical structure. Verbal improvisation is thus encouraged.

An obvious feature of this rhyme is the preponderance of triplet figures. The fact that these figures derive from spoken Ewe continues to enhance the observation about *figurae* in this repertoire. We may even speculate that the recurring response, "kàmìnàkà," because it contains a triplet in its rhythmic structure, "generated" – compositionally speaking – the rhyme as a whole.

A third example of a spoken rhyme is shown in Example 3.3 (CD track 7), and refers to a woman's first sexual encounter. "They have split the child," says the text, to which the answer is a sequence of vocables (faa-wɛ-faa-faa-wɛ). In performance, the vocables serve as the fixed pattern or Response to the first two bars. As in the previous example, children learn to substitute phrases for "They have split the child" and "The child was not yet grown."



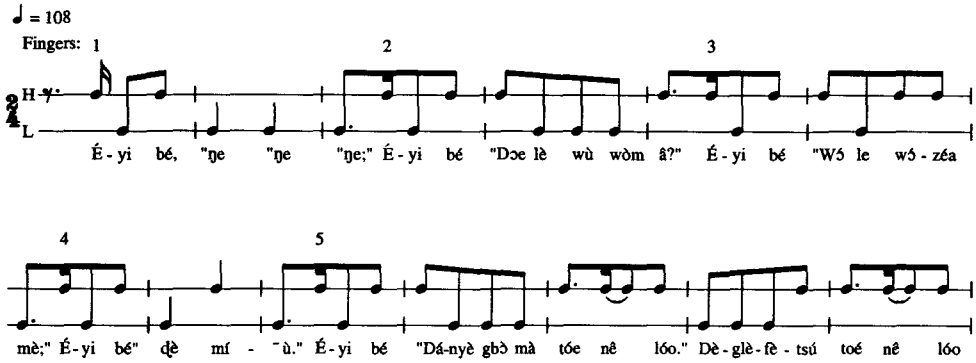
Example 3.3. Play song

An interesting rhythmic effect results from the silent beat with which the rhyme begins. The first phrase originates in bar 1 and terminates in bar 5, making it an irregular 8+1/3 beat phrase subdivided into 4 and 4+1/3 beats. However, the downbeat of bar 5 supplies the missing beat of bar 1, as becomes clear in the repetition of the phrase. So, although phrase boundaries occur on the second crotchet of bar 2 (the longest note in the phrase so far and the completion of the Call) and on the downbeat of bar 5 (the completion of the Response) the cyclical nature of the rhyme shows that a beat lasting a third of a bar has been "suppressed," so to speak. Such effects, conceptualized as a conflict between meter and grouping, are not uncommon in a repertoire in which off-beat phrasing plays an important role.

A counting game

A second category of Northern Ewe children's music is a series of games based on the counting of objects (fingers, toes, heads, stones, beads, nuts, and so on). Example 3.4 transcribes the music of one such game. Participants count the fingers of one hand, assigning certain utterances and functions to each finger. A plot is thus unveiled in which five hungry siblings devise a strategy for finding food. Counting begins with the littlest finger, who signals discontent by crying. (The onomatopoeic "ŋẽ, ŋẽ, ŋẽ" depicts the crying.) Then the fourth finger asks whether he is hungry. The middle finger reveals that there is flour in the flour pot. The index finger suggests that they cook and eat it. But – and here comes the reversal – the thumb spoils the fun by saying that he is going to report this conspiracy to mother. At least two lessons are intended by this rhyme. The first is the importance of telling the truth: children must not steal food, or take matters into their own hands by cooking the family's precious flour while their mothers are not at home. The second is care and cooperation. The little finger's crying elicits concern from the next finger. Soon the other fingers are working together to find a solution to the problem. Here is another manifestation of the Northern Ewe ethos of caring for one's neighbor. In this particular context, however, one "bad apple" teaches a greater truth that undermines the action planned by the other siblings.

Two types of movement define the character of this counting game. The first and most obvious is the succession of spoken rhythms. As is usual in this repertory, the phrase begins with an off-beat and extends to two full bars. The two-bar length then becomes the referential unit for subsequent phrases. So, even where there are more syllables than the six that comprise the first phrase, they are accommodated within the same time frame (syllabic counts are 8 for fingers 2 and 3, 6 for fingers 1 and 4, and 10 for the "spoil sport," finger 5). In general, words maintain the rhythms of speech and respect its tonal patterns. Notice the occurrence of the familiar syncopated rhythm in bars 11 and 13.

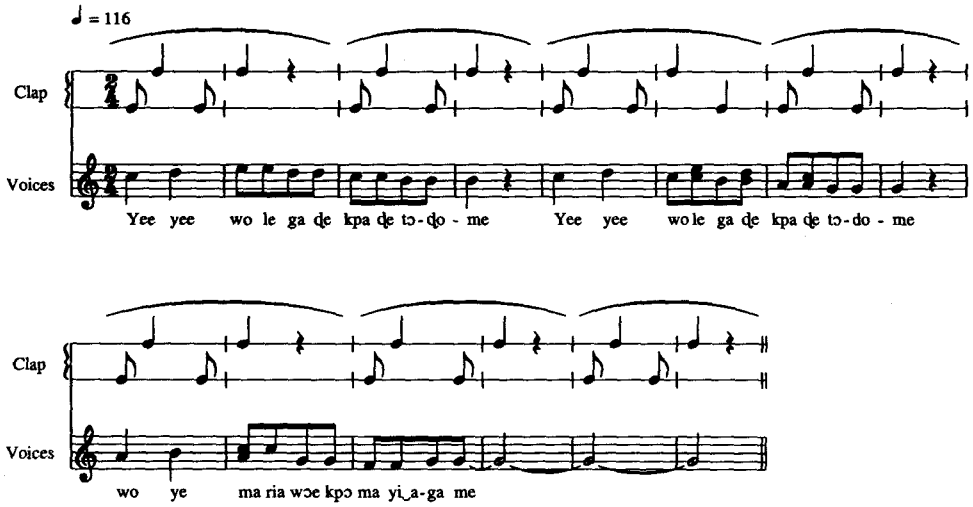


Example 3.4. Children's finger-counting play song

The second broadly rhythmic element resides in the physical act of counting fingers. Contact with fingers is made on the downbeats of bars 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9. Obviously, if the fingers of the left hand are being counted, then it is the right hand that does the touching. The moments of arrival on successive fingers are marked for consciousness not only because they represent the completion of the arc traversed between adjacent fingers but because they coincide with the last strong syllable of each spoken phrase. As in Example 3.3, there is a tension between the grouping of verbal phrases across bar lines and the emphasis on alternate downbeats throughout. This art of being able to coordinate different patterns of rhythm and movement, which reaches its most sophisticated form in dances such as *Gàbàɖà*, *Gbòlò*, and *Zígí*, is developed at an early age by Northern Ewe children.

Games teaching movement and coordination

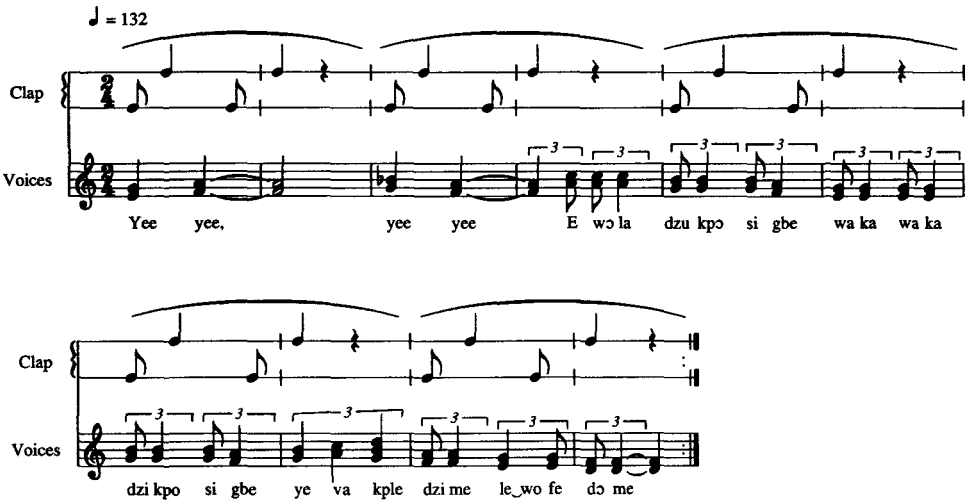
Most children's games consist of a musical dimension (song or rhyme) as well as an "extramusical" dimension that is organically linked to it. This is the case with a favorite Northern Ewe game in which a pattern of hand claps is accompanied by song. (Example 3.5 (CD track 8) is a transcription of one performance of the song.) The melody is sung in three four-bar phrases, the first two finishing with a rest, and the last with a note that may be held for an extra bar or two, depending on the performers' wishes. The clap pattern, which must be regarded as the central element, is, by contrast, a fixed two-bar pattern. The interesting thing about the relationship of clap pattern to song is that the clap pattern can be shifted backwards (or forwards, which amounts to the same thing) by a bar. Thus, this version of the game has the clap pattern beginning at bar 1 while another might have it beginning in bar 2. The reason for not specifying the exact length of the last note becomes clear: performers may switch from one type of alignment to another within the same performance. (In the accompanying recording, the third of six renditions of the game song departs from the pattern set by the first two; the fourth, however, returns to the original.)



Example 3.5. Children's clapping game song

Example 3.5 also illustrates the multiplicity of metric and phenomenal accents that give Northern Ewe music some of its special character. Consider, for example, the clap pattern itself. Its syncopated first bar (with a short–long–short pattern) generates tension that is not resolved until the second bar. On a higher structural level, the two-bar pattern may be understood as an upbeat–downbeat or weak–strong succession. Similarly, despite the timbral contrast, bar 1 of the vocal melody has the feel of an anacrusis in relation to bar 2. We thus have a coincidence of "clap accent" and "melodic accent." If the melody is shifted over, however, these accents compete against each other, making for a more fluid, forward-moving texture. Yet another set of accents, which we may call tonal accents, emerges from the overall contour of the melody. Northern Ewe songs typically descend from a high note sung at or near the beginning of a melody through an interval of a fourth or fifth to a terminal low note. A descent through the line C–B–A–G may be inferred from the melody in Example 3.5. For the listener focusing on this descent, the attainment of each structural note creates a phenomenal or "tonal" accent.[5]

Example 3.6 (CD track 9) is another version of the clap-and-sing game. The foundational clap pattern is the same as in Example 3.5, but the melody is different. The rhythms of this triplet-dominated melody are harder to coordinate with the clap pattern than was the case in the previous example. As before, the two-bar clap cycle may begin with either the first or the second bar. More than that of Example 3.5, this song text provides ample opportunity for improvisation. "We don't send an idiot to the market. The idiot goes to the market, buys soap water, and returns to tell us that s/he has bought a beverage." The principle of text construction is to imagine circumstances in which people act stupidly and

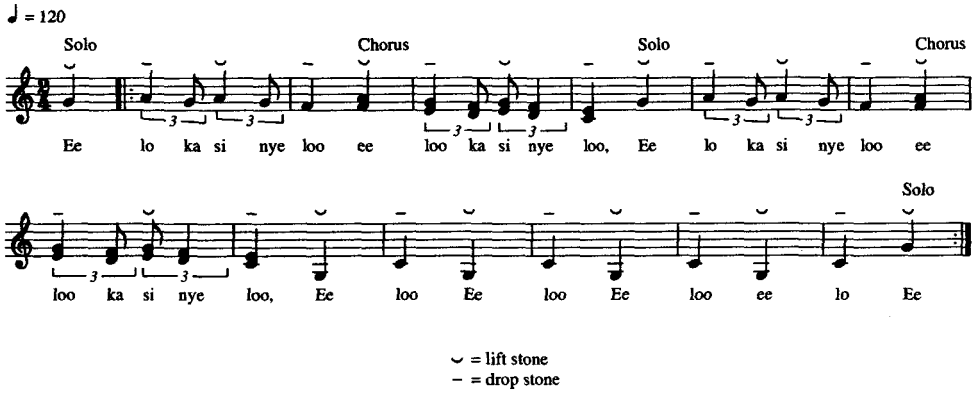


Example 3.6. Children's clapping game song (a version of Example 3.5)

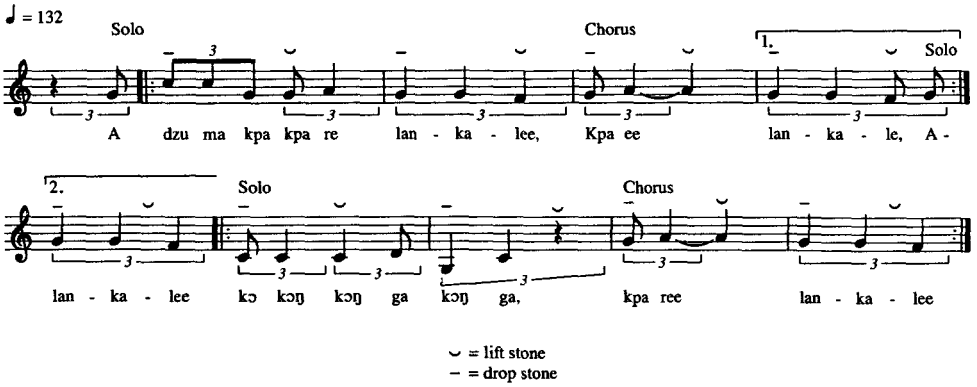
to frame their actions in terms of a marked distinction or opposition (for soap water = beverage one might substitute yam = meat, fish = flowers, and so on).

In performing Examples 3.5 and 3.6, girls form themselves into a circle. The execution of the clap pattern requires three pairs of hands and alternates between "outer" claps, that is, those that involve the two people on either side of each participant, and "inner" claps, those done by the participant herself. Let us assume that Girls A, B, and C succeed each other in the circle. Let us also number the successive attack points of the clap pattern as 1, 2, 3, 4 respectively. The game proceeds as follows. At points 1 and 3 Girl B's downward-facing right palm makes contact with the upward-facing left palm of Girl C, while her upward-facing left palm makes contact with the downward-facing right palm of Girl A. At 2 and 4, each girl claps her own pair of hands. This completes one cycle of the clap pattern. (In a popular variant of this game song, a fifth clap takes the place of the crotchet rest in bar 2. Palms return to the positions occupied earlier at claps 1 and 3, but with the important difference that right and left palms face up and down respectively.)

Movement and coordination are also taught by means of a game called "Adzumakpakpare," found in Akpafu, but available in numerous local variants. Children squat in a circle, each with a stone in front of him or her. The object of the game is to avoid accumulating more than one stone in front of you by moving each stone at the appropriate moment to coincide with the main pulses of the song. In keeping with the symbolic meanings of "left" and "right" in Northern Ewe culture (left is dirty, right is clean), stones are usually moved anti-clockwise or from right to left. A lapse in concentration may result in the accumulation of more than one stone, and this is grounds for eliminating the child concerned.



Example 3.7. Children's stone-lifting play song

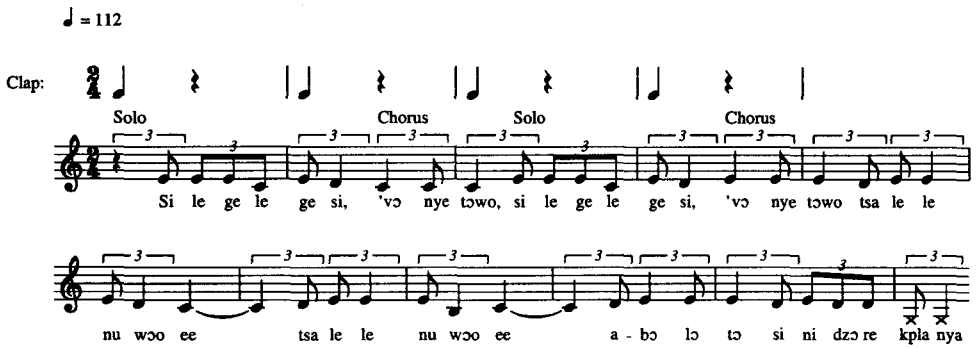


Example 3.8. Children's stone-lifting play song

The game continues until all but one of the participants have been eliminated. (Occasionally, the speed may be increased with a subsequent repetition of the song in order to catch the unsuspecting.)

Examples 3.7 and 3.8 (CD tracks 10 and 11) provide transcriptions of two songs that accompany "Adzumakpakpare." There are at least two levels of rhythmic activity here, one deriving from the songs themselves and the second deriving from the physical act of lifting and setting down the stones. The song in Example 3.7 is cast in a Call–Response form, and reveals a 2+2 grouping. Both Call and Response begin with strong upbeats. In addition to the familiar triplet effects, a metrical ambiguity results from the placing of stones. Although each stone is lifted on the upbeat or off-beat and set down on the following downbeat, the opposite arrangement is often used as variant within the same performance. The fixed pattern of lifting and depositing the stone is thus aligned differently with the accompanying song. This interchangeability underscores the fluidity of Northern Ewe conceptions of meter. In training children in the art of exchanging upbeats for downbeats, this game song, like numerous others, prepares the

children for a musical life of *playing with rhythms*. The Northern Ewe clearly take much aesthetic pleasure in apprehending competing accents and apparent "misalignments." In the case of Example 3.7, and despite our transcription, we might speak less of a duple meter with a normative stress on each downbeat than of a duple grouping based on an unchanging pulse.

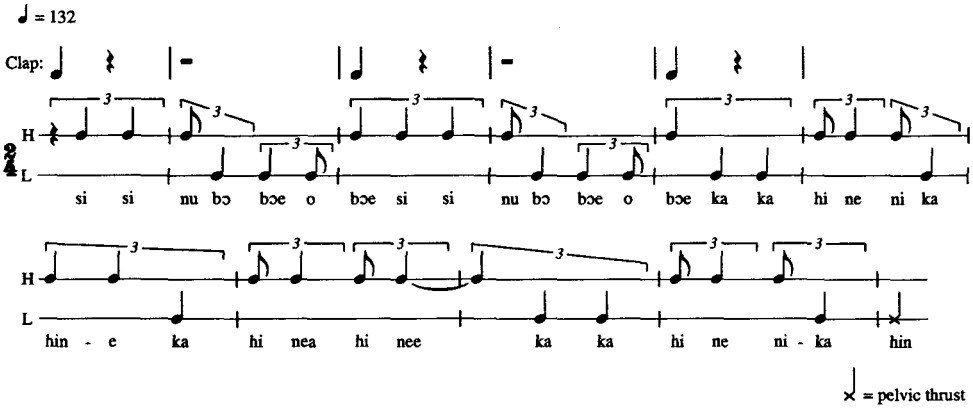


Example 3.9. Cloth-exchanging play song

Example 3.9 (CD track 12) accompanies a game which teaches coordination of physical movement and singing. It is played by women dressed in traditional cloth, namely, a blouse, a wrap-around skirt ("first cloth"), and a "second cloth" that is placed around the upper torso. It is this second cloth that is traded in the course of the game. Standing in a circle, the women play as follows. A leader calls the song and the rest of the group responds. At the vocable "kplànyà," which is spoken rather than sung, each woman takes over the "second cloth" of the person in front of her. The song is then repeated, allowing each woman to wear her newly acquired cloth. She will lose it again at the next "kplànyà," and this process of acquiring and relinquishing cloth continues until a full cycle is completed, that is, until each woman has her original cloth back. At the end, they throw their cloths into the air and exclaim "kplànyà" one last time.

The pattern of movement in this song features a mixture of patterned and unpatterned actions. While the song is being sung, movement is unpatterned, allowing each woman to adjust her cloth at her own pace. This action must be completed, however, by the time the word "kplànyà" comes along. By contrast, no liberties are taken in performing the rhythms of the song. It is easy to underestimate the difficulty of maintaining strict singing while engaged in "free action," but any reader who attempts to play the game just described will get a sense of the challenges involved. The interpenetration of free and strict movement may be understood as a transposition into gestural space of the interplay between free and strict rhythms.

Another game designed to teach movement and found in Pekí-Blengo and elsewhere is "Toron toron." In this game, song provides an unchanging metrical



Example 3.10. Pelvic thrust play song

framework for movement in circles within a larger circle. Thus, Person A moves to the right of the circle, encircles person B, and takes person B's place as person B in turn moves towards person C, encircles her, and takes her place. This encircling and exchanging of positions continues until everyone in the circle has had a go. The whole process may then be repeated, and it will continue to be repeated as long as the participants have the stamina to do so. Part of the challenge of this game is to combine circular movement – which tends to have a disorienting effect on one's sense of direction – with the linearity implicit in singing a song in strict rhythm.

Finally, the rhyme transcribed in Example 3.10 (CD track 13) is part of a game that teaches about sex. Here, too, the beginning position is a circular arrangement. Spoken in strict rhythm, the rhyme is accompanied by hand claps in alternate bars. As each repetition of the rhyme begins, one woman moves to the center of the circle, wiggles her bottom, and delivers a pelvic thrust to coincide with the last two notes of the rhyme. A competitive element enters the game via the varying intensities and styles of pelvic thrusts.

A few of the inner dynamics of this rhyme may be observed in the opening phrase. As the transcription shows, bar 1 begins with an unsounded beat which gives the first two crotchet triplets an expectant, anacrusic quality. Contrary to what one might expect, however, the downbeat of bar 2 fails to provide closure. The bar's short–long–long–short pattern carries the phrase's momentum forward towards the downbeat of bar 3. It is here that closure is finally attained. Note that this is the first time that a crotchet has occurred on the main beat, and also that a hand clap reinforces the articulative importance of this moment.

Some readers may wonder why the last three examples, said to be played by women, are discussed here under the rubric of children's music. I do not know how many readers sensed a change in the musical language of these examples in relation to the previous seven. There are none. And this is part of my reason for suppressing the information that these last three games are played, not by children,

but by adult women. Women play these games for the entertainment of children and, more importantly, by assuming the personae of children. This is another sign of the blurring of boundaries between child and adult musical languages.

To sum up: Northern Ewe children's game songs call for the coordination of rhythm or music with movement. Movements may be patterned or unpatterned. Patterned movement projects into three-dimensional space a network of strict (that is, metric) two-dimensional rhythms. Unpatterned movements project a contrasting, and more complex, network of rhythms. The dynamic quality of Northern Ewe rhythms comes from three related techniques: suppressed or silent beats, short–long rhythmic patterns, and off-beat phrasing. The separate periodicities of spoken rhyme and physical movement are aligned just as frequently as they are "misaligned." Triplet effects, understood as *figurae* deriving from spoken language, occur often and within the basic duple meter. The totality of these elements and practices – including many not illustrated here – supports the view that the essential features of Northern Ewe rhythm are learned at an early age.[6]

Songs in free rhythm

A distinction between "free" and "strict" rhythm is frequently invoked in studies of African music. Hornbostel used it in 1928, Ward in 1927, Nketia in 1963, and it has been reproduced by students of African music since then. Although no such distinction registers in Northern Ewe musical discourse – there is, as indicated in the Prologue, no single word for "rhythm" in Ewe – there is a clear difference between songs in "free" rhythm and those in "strict" rhythm. Free rhythm has less to do with rhythm as such, and more to do with meter and periodicity. Music lacking a specific meter and a clear sense of periodicity is said to be in free rhythm. A comparison with recitative in opera, oratorio, or cantata is not entirely inappropriate. Strict rhythm by contrast refers to the presence of a tactus, a palpable metric structure, and a resultant periodicity.

It is necessary to reconfigure one aspect of this opposition in order to improve its applicability to Northern Ewe materials. Songs that are ostensibly in "free rhythm" are songs that reproduce the rhythms of speech. It would seem preferable, therefore, to speak of "speech rhythm" rather than "free rhythm." In the Northern Ewe vocal repertoire, as in other African repertories, the organization of long and short note values suggests not an unbridled freedom of organization but a close connection to the rhythms of speech. And where strict rhythm seems applicable, we might also recall the demonstration in Chapter 2 and note that elements of speech rhythm may be found in songs in strict rhythm. Although it undermines a handy opposition, this reconfiguration may well provide a more accurate characterization of the Northern Ewe repertoire. Moreover, free rhythm and strict rhythm are distributed across various genres. Not only funeral dirges

but recreational songs, songs of insult and even folktale interludes come in varieties of free and strict rhythm.

Two songs by Adjei Kɔmi of Mátse

Adjei Kɔmi is a singer-composer of the village of Matse who performs songs in order to comfort those in distress, inspire those going into battle, or entertain others. His songs are generally improvised, which means that he relies on stock verbal and musical phrases which he arranges in a particular order to fit a particular performance context. The two song texts – or better, fragments, since they are clearly part of on-going processes – transcribed in Examples 3.11 and 3.12 (CD tracks 14 and 15) were improvised one afternoon in September of 1986. Adjei Kɔmi relies on the contour of speech tones and the rhythms of individual words in his improvisation. To some listeners, these fragments approximate more nearly to performed speech than they do to song. Two aspects of this performance may be highlighted. The first is the overall formal process, and the second is the rhythmic and tone structure of the individual lines.

We may study the formal process of Example 3.11 by numbering each of Adjei Kɔmi's verbal phrases. This throws into relief the central role of repetition in the construction of form.

1 Okɔsi kpataku ee
2 Okɔsi kpatakuo, egli ee
3 Okɔsi kpataku, ade mefoa gbe o, eto medegbe
4 Okɔsi kpataku, ade mefoa gbe o, eto medegbe
5 Vuɔtete, ategbleme hatsi ee
6 Okɔkɔefe nɔ, kpɔkutsiku kple agbetsia gbe ee
7 Okɔkɔefe nɔ, kpɔkutsiku kple agbetsia gbe ee
8 Samamu nu diɔ ɖoto madi, vuo me ɖi o, gão me ɖie o, gbagba
9 Samamu nu diɔ ɖoto madi, vuo me ɖi o, gão me ɖi o, dza o
10 Hãio, hãio, hãio, hãio
11 Ne mewɔ nu ɖiɔ ɖo tome
12 Ne vuɔ me ɖi o gã me ɖi o dzã o

Paradigmatic arrangement:

1
2
3
4 5 6
7 8
9 10 11
12

Example 3.11. Adjei Kɔmi's improvised song

Adjei Kɔmi starts off with an idea (1), repeats it by adding a little suffix (2), extends it further by adding several more words (3), and then repeats the extended version (4). Although an additive or developmental process may be observed across units 1–4, the units are grouped together under the same paradigmatic class because of their identical points of departure. Adjei Kɔmi then introduces a new idea (5), and, without repeating it this time, moves to another idea (6), which is immediately repeated (7). Then comes yet another idea (8) which is also immediately repeated (9). The pattern of repetition is interrupted by a fourfold repetition of a single "song word," *hãio* (10); Adjei Kɔmi seems to be "killing time" here, taking a breath as he plans his next move. Then comes a new idea (11), followed by a close musical variant (12). The overall narrative process consists of a gradual accretion of "new" units alternating with repetitions of "old" units.

1 Kpakpra ne xɔ madzi dzi ee
2 Kpakpra ne xɔ madzi dzi ee
3 Madzi drui aɖe dzo madɔ gbe, gbagbã
4 Kpakpra ne xɔ madzi dzi ee
5 Madzi drui aɖe dzo madɔ gbe, hãio
6 Hãio, hãio, hãio
7 Kpakpra ne xɔ madzi dzi ee
8 Madzi drui ade dzo madɔ gbe, gbagbã
9 Afi magbe kalẽ gbɔ
10 Afi magbe kale gbɔ
11 Afi magbe kale gbɔ
12 Afi magbe kale gbɔ
13 Afi magbe kale gbɔ
14 Kalẽ ɖe nyo viviɛ menya woa, dzo me nu e
15 Ava kale de nyo viviɛ menya woa wo, dzo me nu e.

Paradigmatic arrangement:

1
2 3
4 5 6
7 8 9
10
11
12
13 14
15

Example 3.12. Adjei Kɔmi's improvised song

The compositional strategy of Example 3.12 is not dissimilar to that of Example 3.11. Adjei Kɔmi sings an inaugural theme (1), which he repeats immediately (2). Then comes a new theme (3), after which the composer returns to the earlier 2–3 succession (4–5). As in unit 10 of Example 3.11, Adjei Komi next settles on a song word, *hãio*, in order to regroup (6). He continues by returning, for the second time, to the 2–3 succession (7–8) before adding a new theme (9). This theme is repeated four times (10–13) after which Adjei Kɔmi takes up his last theme (14), which is also repeated immediately to conclude the narrative (15).

Although similar in their broad narrative structures, the two improvised fragments show significant internal differences. Whereas Example 3.11 takes off slowly, dwelling with some deliberateness on its opening unit, Example 3.12 lifts off with less hesitation. But unlike Example 3.11, which moves on once it has abandoned its opening theme, Example 3.12 keeps coming back to its opening theme. And whereas the most heavily used paradigm in Example 3.11 occurs right at the beginning (units 1–4), the comparable paradigm in Example 3.12 (units 9–13) occurs towards the end of the segment.

In both songs, the tempo of delivery approximates that of normal speech. The mode of articulation throughout is syllabic, further underlining the resemblance to speech. The predominant intonational pattern is that of speech, although there are occasional excursions into the realm of "melody." For example, in the two successive renditions of units 8 and 9 of Example 3.11, the first functions as a musical question to which the second supplies an answer. Similarly, snatches of melody borrowed from various Northern Ewe popular forms are used elsewhere. Adjei Kɔmi further uses terminal vowels as vehicles for broaching purely musical matters, albeit briefly.[7]

One detail in Adjei Kɔmi's performance that might engender speculation about Northern Ewe singing habits is his inability to sustain notes, or, whenever he tries, his inability to maintain their pitch. If one examines transcriptions of Northern Ewe music, one is struck by the extremely low incidence of held notes. Where these occur, they are invariably terminal notes. One is also likely to be struck by a related absence: that of melismas. If we reason that held notes and melismas open up a purely musical dimension for the composer to play in/with, then we might say that, in the Northern Ewe aesthetic system, playing with rhythms is preferred to playing with pitch. The net outcome of these aesthetic choices on Adjei Kɔmi's performance is a "mixed" product: although predominantly speech-like, these two "songs" in free rhythm also engage occasionally with song.

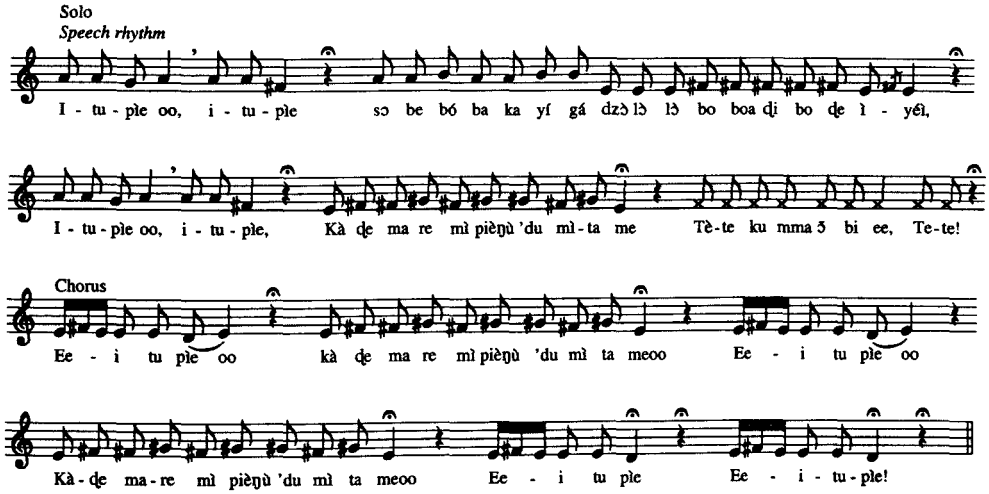
An Akpafu funeral dirge

The Akpafu funeral dirge, performed mainly by post-menopausal women, may be described as a total art work, since it brings together oral poetry, ordinary

speech, music, and dance. The words of dirges are derived in part from formulaic poetic sources and in part from spontaneous reactions to the particular death being mourned. Thus, one dirge may be built around the rhetorical question, "Who will not be bathed by the sponge of death?", while another may comprise a listing of the attributes of a departed father ("he who provided salt, meat, and yam," "he who welcomed visitors") or mother ("she who could cook very well"). Dirges include sung portions which may be regarded as "music." And the performance of a dirge is usually accompanied by some form of movement, either a patterned movement built into the musical structure of the dirge, or a freer movement that unfolds simultaneously with the patterns of the dirge.[8]

The standard form of the dirge follows the traditional Call–Response pattern. A lead singer intones the Call or introductory segment (A), to which the chorus responds (B). The A–B pattern is then repeated a number of times; the dirge usually ends with B. Since A is performed solo, a certain freedom in execution is possible. Largely improvised by means of stock phrases that have been internalized by singers, the A section is delivered in a free, speech-like rhythm. Some parts of it may be spoken, exploiting the intonational contour, rhythms, and tone patterns of speech. Other parts may be sung either in a full-fledged singing voice, or in a Schoenbergian *Sprechstimme*. The B section, by contrast, is on the whole more song-like, although its dependence on the music of language is not diminished. Between phrases in the B section there are gaps of musical silence, filled in by shouts and wails, all motivated by this particular death or by the larger phenomenon of death. We might say that the Akpafu funeral dirge exploits the continuum from emergent speech through speech proper to fully formed song.

Example 3.13 (CD track 16) is a dirge sung during the bathing of the corpse. Its structure follows the standard pattern outlined above. Line 1 consists of the



Example 3.13. Akpafu funeral dirge

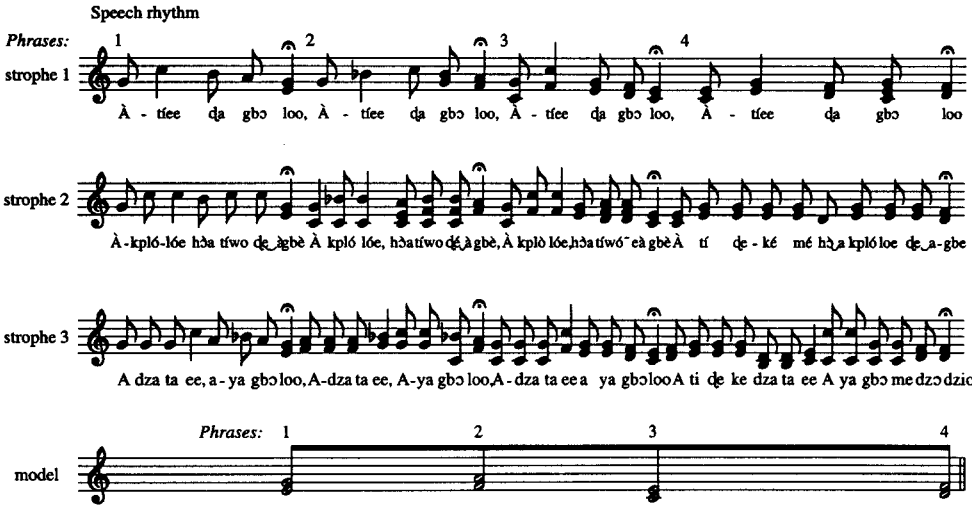
repeated word *itupie*, a word that identifies the dirge, and is therefore a fixed rather than a variable element of structure. Line 2 is a poetic formula found in other dirges, while line 3, specific to this dirge, acts as a signal to the chorus to get ready to respond to the Call. The chorus in turn reproduces the content of the dirge-specific lines (1 and 3), and fills in the gaps between lines with expressions of sorrow and anguish in ordinary as well as poetic language. (The improvisatory nature of the dirge explains why, in this performance, the Call is more elaborate during the repetition of the dirge [it now displays the pattern 1 2 1 5 1 2 3, where 5 is a new element]. The Response, however, stays the same.)

The dirge is the site of a remarkable confluence of various kinds, qualities, and pacings of movement and coordination, and it is for this reason that it may be regarded as an essentially rhythmic phenomenon. The following are three constituents of this phenomenon. On the largest level, contrast is registered between the spoken or half-spoken Call and the sung Response. The Call seems to move at a quicker pace than the Response. Its introductory and annunciatory character translate into musical metaphor as "upbeat," while the Response's grounding of themes selected from the Call provides the complementary "downbeat." A second rhythmic aspect, deriving from the first, is the contrast between the non-metrical quality of the Call and the emerging sense of meter in the Response. The latter acquires a periodic quality from its pattern of repeated phrases. We may characterize the progression from Call to Response in rhythmic metaphor as movement from free not to strict rhythm but to less free rhythm. Reinforcing the largely repetitive Response as opposed to the non-repetitive Call is the series of wails, shouts, ululations, and cries that punctuate the silences between phrases. This loading of unsung moments generates a new periodicity in the unsung realm that provides timbral contrast and counterpoint to the periodicity of sung phrases.

A third rhythmic aspect of the dirge emerges from the pattern of physical movement that is a part of performance. Performers place their palms in the center of their heads – the traditional symbol of mourning – as they take paces forwards and backwards (they may, for example, take ten paces in each direction). This walking may or may not be at an agitated pace; the pace chosen reflects the mood of the performers. Whatever the pace, however, the resulting walk is more or less strictly patterned, and it provides the most explicit hint of a pulse or of potential metrical articulation in the dirge. This unborn meter contrasts with the freer rhythmic dimensions outlined above.

Free rhythm in the introduction to *Gbòlò*

Rhythm sometimes functions as an activator of a background pitch structure. In such contexts, the compositional process may be conceptualized as a generative



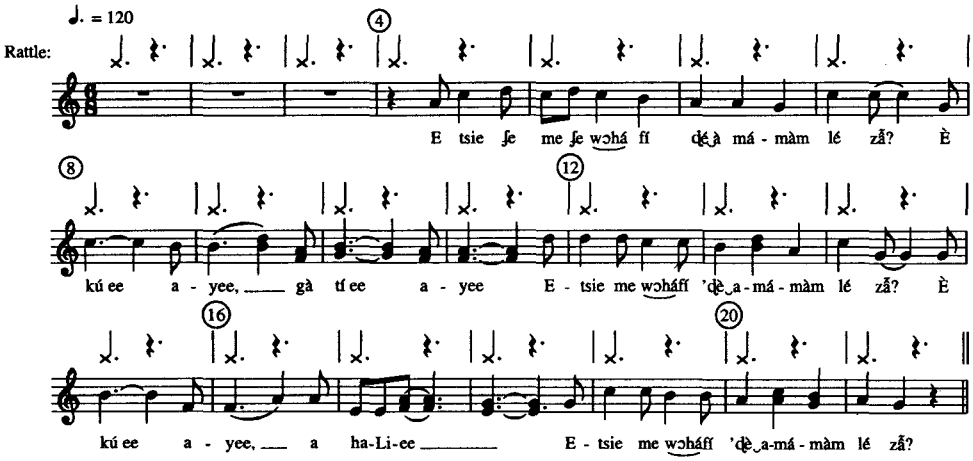
Example 3.14. Song introducing *Gbòlò* dance

process, with rhythm as the main generative element. In many Pekí dirges, for example, the essential pitch structure consists of a progression of dyads ranging in number from two to eight. Like the structural-melodic contour discussed in connection with Example 3.5, this model, internalized by singers, guides the delivery of the rhythms of song. For example, the widely performed recreational dance *Gbòlò* is often introduced by a section of *a capella* singing in free rhythm. This "warm up" exercise, similar in function to the *hàtsiátsía* section of Southern Ewe dances, offers performers an opportunity to reflect on "deep thoughts" – paradoxes, natural injustices, enigmas, puzzling truths, and others. Example 3.14 (CD track 17) transcribes this section of a performance of *Gbòlò* heard in Pekí-Tsamé. The musical structure consists of a "background" model consisting of a sequence of four dyads (shown on the bottom stave of Example 3.14) activated, recitative style, by the rhythms of the text. The entire dyadic structure is composed out three times (labeled "strophe 1," "strophe 2," and "strophe 3.")

Performances like this are often improvised. Performers rely on their knowledge of speech rhythm to devise a strategy for distributing the syllables of text among the notes of the background model. It is not always the case that performers know either the model or the words, but this does not discourage them from discovering them in performance. What they do is to sleep-walk their way from one harmony to the next, always listening for, and immediately blending into, the most prominent and – they assume – correct voices. The conflation of rehearsal and performance is not unique to *Gbòlò* performers but is characteristic of practically all Northern Ewe groups. In the composition of this free rhythmic introduction to *Gbòlò*, then, we may say that the pitch model is conceptually prior to the individual rhythms of the words, but that these speech rhythms function crucially to transform an arhythmic background into a lively foreground.

Songs in strict rhythm

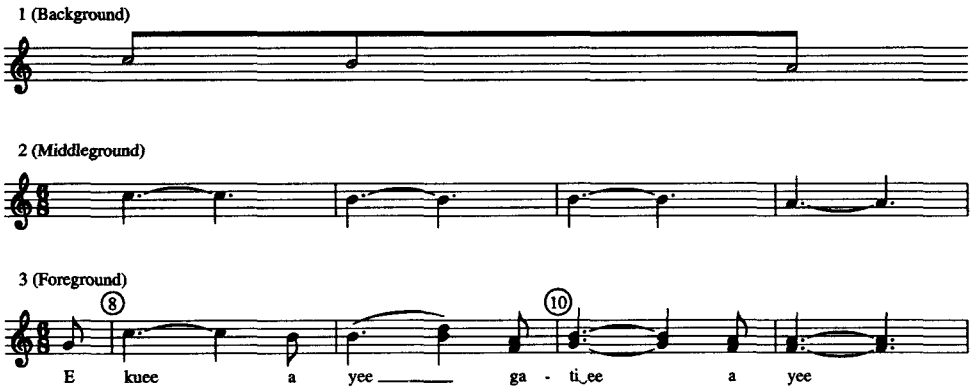
The strictness of songs in strict rhythm derives from the presence of a foundational pulse, often articulated by a hand clap, rattle (*akayɛ*), or bell. Strict rhythm can be heard in most Northern Ewe genres, ranging from the children's game songs that we studied at the beginning of this chapter through work songs to recreational songs. We have space here to illustrate only two such songs.



Example 3.15. Ewe funeral dirge

The dirge transcribed in Example 3.15 (CD track 18) is typical of the Ho variety of *àvihawó* or crying songs. Sung by older women, this dirge is accompanied throughout by the *akayɛ* rather than by a clap. One striking feature of the dirge lies in the nature of closure. Here as elsewhere, the dirge closes not within the confines of a deliberate and prolonged closing mechanism, but suddenly, without structural warning. It is as if it stops rather than ends. And rhythm clearly plays a part in engineering this kind of close. It is tempting to find mimetic value in this approach to closure, for the Ewe text asks a hard question: "What have I done so as to be rendered naked?" The answer can only be silence, of course. In performance, the rattles set up a metronomic point of reference in the opening bars. Then the lead singer enters with her Call. The chorus responds, after which lead and chorus sing together until the end. The dirge may be repeated as many times as the performers wish.

A familiar feature of the dirge's rhythmic structure is the presence of cross-rhythm or reverse hemiola – triple grouping within a duple meter (see bars 5, 6, 13, 20, and 21). The abruptness of closure comes in part from the occurrence of triple groupings in the last two bars. More interesting, however, is the set of rhythmic effects that emerges from the pitch language of the dirge. In general, Northern Ewe songs exhibit a clear difference between structural and embellishing notes. With this comes a linear framework that allows events to be interpreted in



Example 3.16. Generating a segment of Ewe dirge

reference to descending lines as models. Example 3.16 demonstrates one way in which the conceptual origins of a pair of sequentially related phrases from this dirge (bars 8–11) may be explained. In the background is an arhythmic succession of pitches descending through a minor third, C–B–A (line 1 of Example 3.16). This originary gesture is rhythmicized and metricized into a four-bar phrase (line 2), which is in turn embellished (line 3) through the addition of words that bring with them their own rhythmic characteristics. Structural features include the anticipation of the downbeats of bars 9 and 11 and the prolongation, by means of anterior lower neighbor-notes, of the downbeat of bar 10. The overall progression from lines 1 to 3 is thus a *generative* process.[9]

Another source of rhythmic interest lies in the repetition, on different structural levels, of the same sequence of pitches. In bars 4 and 5, the progression C–D is rhythmically recomposed, and this confers a tonal accent on the second of the C–D groupings. On a larger level, the sequence of pitches C–B–A in bars 5–6 of Example 3.15 is "stretched out" in bars 8–11 (shown in Example 3.16), creating a sort of motivic parallelism. Although these technical designations of processes of recomposition may seem, at first sight, to be worlds removed from the nature of Northern Ewe discourse about music, the fact that emphasis is frequently placed on notions of variation and embellishment in their discourse suggests that the designations are not inappropriate. Example 3.16 shows one way of concretizing such notions.

One final feature of Example 3.15 is the interval of a fourth, which occurs several times. Although it is primarily a feature of pitch structure, it contributes to the rhythmic structure as well. It is surprising that the importance of the fourth has gone unremarked in the admittedly modest literature on Northern Ewe music. Many are the songs that begin with an ascending fourth or that use fourths as part of their ordinary syntax. Fourths occur frequently, and often with great rhetorical effect in cadential situations. They may also delineate the linear framework of entire songs. Example 3.15 contains several fourths. For example,

rising fourths occur in bars 6–7, 7–8, and 18–19, while falling fourths result from the embellishments in bars 9, 13, and 17. Particularly dramatic are the fourths in bars 13 (D–A), 15 (B–F), and 16–17 (A–E), which occur in different metrical positions and with different note values. If the intervallic resources of this dirge seem modest, its extravagant methods of variation more than compensate for the modesty. Here, in miniature, is an example of the Northern Ewe art of variation.

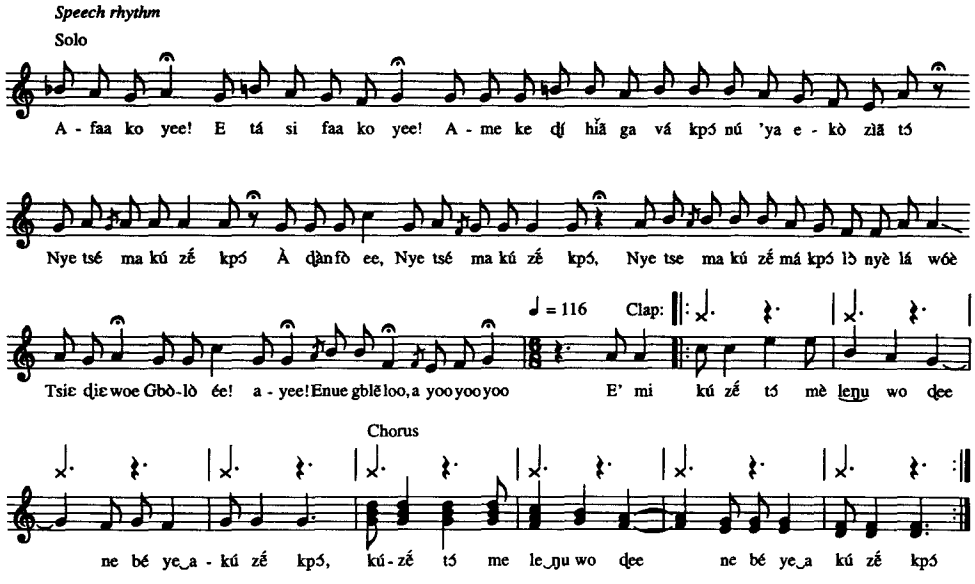
Example 3.15 should provide ample confirmation of the fact that rhythm and pitch are intertwined, and that the rhythmic structure of Northern Ewe songs derives as much from the play of interval as from the pattern of grouping and accentuation. This point needs to be emphasized in order to counter two related impressions about African rhythm: that drum-ensemble music is the paradigmatic African music, and that its "complexity" exists only in the dimension of rhythm, not pitch. One need not dispute the modest use of tonal contrast in drumming in order to see how the "face" of "African rhythm" changes considerably as soon as intervallic qualities are included.

From free to strict (and back again)

The distinction between "free" and "strict" rhythm, although invoked earlier to characterize different categories of song, should not obscure the fact that a number of Northern Ewe songs partake of *both* modes of rhythmic signification. For example, some Pekí funeral dirges begin with a free, recitative-like section, sung solo, which is then followed by a strictly measured choral response in which a phrase or two are repeated several times. Sometimes, a paratactic framework facilitates the development of a particular theme. Thus, a dirge about the distance between home and the other world includes a list of locations far from home (Tamale, Takoradi, Kumasi, and so on), while another about who will come and mourn the dead includes a list of famous singers. Paratactic forms are obviously harder to actualize in free rhythm than in strict rhythm.

Example 3.17 (CD track 19) includes a transcription of a dirge that illustrates the free–strict opposition. The long Call, punctuated by pauses and interjections, tells of an insincere sympathizer, one who used to be poor but is now rich. It is her turn to laugh at the remaining poor. The singer then announces – with a shift in narrative voice – that she, too, wishes to die for a while and see how many well-wishers she has. Of course, she finds that she is unable to return from this expedition. The Response dwells on the folly of her decision.

A glance at Example 3.17 reveals clearly the juxtaposition of an unmetered, free-rhythm section with a faster, metered section in compound duple time. Although the Call is transcribed as a series of discrete pitches, its actual performance resembles speech more than song. We may describe it as an instance of performed speech, but one that is heightened to approach the condition of song.



Example 3.17. Ewe funeral dirge

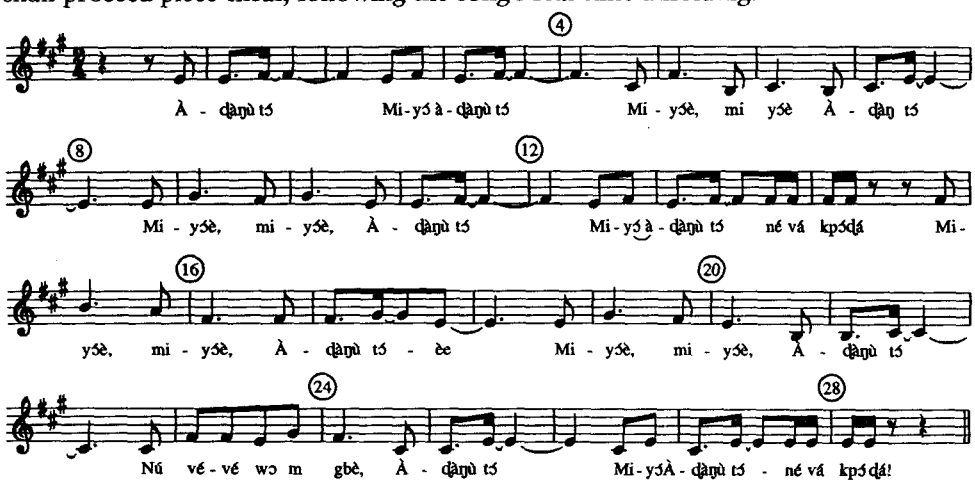
The Response, by contrast, includes the pulse-beating *akaye*, making unequivocal the transformation of speech into song, of "recitative" into "aria." There is, of course, something universal about the tendency to alternate free and strict, unmeasured and measured, fast and slow. In exploiting this duality here and elsewhere, the Northern Ewe do no more than satisfy an innate desire for contrast in artistic matters.

Towards a poetics of Northern Ewe song

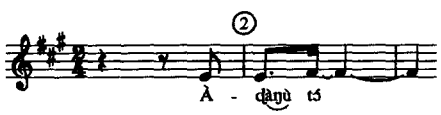
Our concern in this chapter has been with the temporal aspects of song, and we have noted certain general principles of rhythmic organization. It is obvious, however, that general principles, while valuable in orienting us to broad features of the Northern Ewe repertoire, need to be supplemented by detailed criticism of individual songs. The remainder of this chapter attempts to fill this gap by listening closely to one Ewe lament.[10]

Detailed analyses of items from a little-known repertory are likely to strike some readers as ill-founded, premature, or at best of doubtful relevance. I persist, however, because it seems to me a tragedy of ethnomusicological research into African materials that individual works are reduced to the status of exemplars of larger repertories and classified as "types" or "classes" rather than studied as artistic works in their own rights. While the early attempts to convey information about a relatively little-known repertoire may require the researcher to look across at the common features, later stages must make room for detailed analysis of individual works. For I fear that the obsession with "work songs," "funeral

dirges," and "recreational songs" as collectives harbors the prejudice that as individual works – and unlike those of the standard Western repertoire such as Schubert's or Brahms's Lieder – they are slight and unworthy of close analytical attention. The analysis that follows may help to counter this prejudice. Like a tour-guide, I seek to point out features of the musical landscape that might enhance appreciation and enjoyment of the Ewe lament, *Àɖàŋùtɔ́* (Example 3.18). We shall proceed piece-meal, following the song's real-time unfolding.

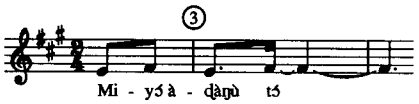


Example 3.18. Ewe lament

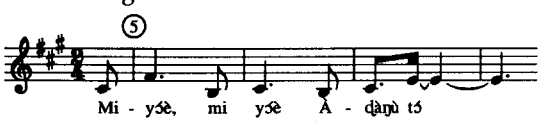


Phrase 1. Àɖàŋùtɔ́ (The counsellor). The call for a counsellor (lit. "the person with advice") immediately suggests a tragedy: an accident, a death, or some other form of loss. The audience for this utterance is not yet explicit. The singer may be addressing herself, an imagined audience, a real audience, or some combination of the three. She pitches the beginning of the song in her optimum vocal range, which also marks the song's primary register. Only two pitches are used here: E forms the point of departure, F♯ the point of arrival. While duration assigns priority to F♯, nothing in the E–F♯ progression conveys an unequivocal tonal tendency. In converting the duration, stress, and speech-tone properties of the word *Àɖàŋùtɔ́* into music, parallelisms as well as non-parallelisms result. In spoken Ewe, the speech-tone pattern of the word is LLH. Its elided middle syllable, *ɖàŋù*, is longer than the outer ones and carries a slight stress. While the longer duration of the middle syllable is "correct" in the musical setting, the lengthening of the third syllable to the value of nine semiquavers is "incorrect." And while the change of pitch on the syllable *tɔ́* parallels the change in the direction of speech tone, the fact that the interval is a major second rather than

the more correct perfect fourth (or so) indicates an imperfect mirroring of word in tone. With each contradiction we are reminded that this is a song, after all, and that its ultimate structural allegiances are to a set of contrapuntal or purely musical procedures, not necessarily to a word-generated contour. With some effort, the rising major second may be heard as a "suppressed" fourth, thereby preparing us for the rhetorically powerful fourth in bars 15–16 that constitutes the song's high point.

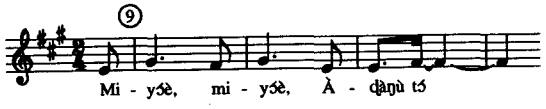


Phrase 2. Miyɔ́ àḍàṇùtɔ́ (Call the counsellor). The singer intensifies her earlier call for a person of advice. The use of the second person plural (*mì*) narrows down the possibilities of who is being addressed. By incorporating the added word *miyɔ́* into the upbeat group, the meaning of this phrase as a repetition and extension of the previous one is made clear. Yoking the second syllable of *miyɔ́* with the first of *àḍàṇùtɔ́* produces an alteration in the absolute contour of *àḍàṇùtɔ́*. The LLH speech-tone pattern, which was reflected in the melody of the previous phrase, is now set as F♯–E–F♯ or HLH (very relatively construed), thus adding to the fund of contradictions between spoken word and melody.

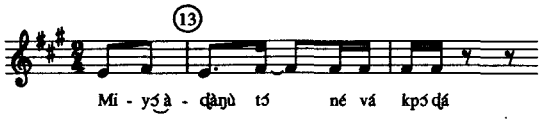


Phrase 3. Miyɔe! Miyɔe! Àḍàṇùtɔ́ (Call him! Call him! The counsellor). The singer quietly intensifies her call for a counsellor. Musical domains do not exhibit parallel processes in the course of the intensification. On the level of the text, the word *miyɔ́*, introduced in the previous phrase as a pretext, a mere upbeat, now takes over the greater duration of this phrase. The effect is of an expansion of a parenthesis. *Miyɔe* also takes an object – the vowel *e* refers to the ungendered third person singular. Its setting as a rising perfect fourth only partly reflects the pre-compositional contour of speech. In place of the normative MHL with something of a glissando between H and L, we hear MH. (It is possible to supply the HL portion of the descent in the "gap" between F♯ and B in bar 6.) When the word *miyɔe* is repeated, the previous fourth is contracted to a major second, and this recalls the intervals of the first two phrases, while preparing the *àḍàṇùtɔ́* in bars 6–8, which also begins with a rising major second. This third occurrence of *àḍàṇùtɔ́* is, for the first time, set to three different pitches, B–C♯–E. If we backtrack to the beginning of the song, we observe a slight but not insignificant cumulative process in the setting of this key word. The first *àḍàṇùtɔ́* "used up" two pitches, E and F♯, with the E repeated. The second *àḍàṇùtɔ́*, although it also uses up the same two pitches, gains emphasis from the internal repetition of those pitches. In using up three pitches, the third occurrence of *àḍàṇùtɔ́* represents the

culmination of a logical process. This sense of culmination is further facilitated by the rhythmic setting of *àɖàɳùtɔ́*, which has not been altered from previous settings, except for the variable length of the final syllable. However, the phrase as a whole acquires something of a subdued character because of its registral placement. So, although the rising fourth of *miyɔ́e* is the largest interval in the song thus far, its rhetorical impact is partly muted by the low register of the C♯. Only with the regaining of E in bars 7–8 are we, as it were, returned to the primary register of the song.



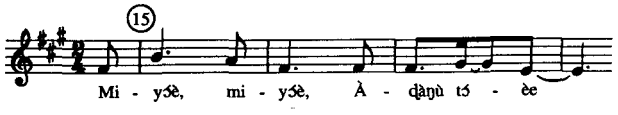
Phrase 4. Miyɔ́e! miyɔ́e! Àɖàɳùtɔ́ (Call him! Call him! The counsellor). The singer repeats her words from the previous phrase, incorporating changes in register and duration that heighten the rhetorical impact of the phrase. In almost symmetrical opposition to the previous phrase, this one explores the space above the primary register established in the first phrase. The change is all the more striking because the singer maintains the exact durations of the previous phrase. Thus, we hear the highest note in the song so far, G♯, just as we heard the lowest note B in the previous phrase. It is the word *Miyɔ́e*, introduced as an upbeat in bar 4, that has grown in significance, and that takes us to the high point, G♯. Heard twice in quick succession, the G♯ signals near-desperation in the singer's call for a counsellor. In terms of the song's emotional trajectory, she may be said to be speaking at the top of her voice. The two-fold *Miyɔ́e* is followed by another *àɖàɳùtɔ́*, this one identical to the one heard at the very beginning of the song. We thus have, in close juxtaposition, the familiar and the superlative in the construction of the song's preliminary high point. Even by Northern Ewe standards, the pitch and rhythmic resources of the song are modest; the small changes that take place with each repetition thus take on an added significance.



Phrase 5. Miyɔ́ àɖàɳùtɔ́ né và kpɔ́ ɖá (Call the counsellor to come and see). Here we reach an important turning-point in the song. A sense of closure is achieved in two ways: note values get shorter, creating the effect of a composed-out acceleration; and a half bar of silence follows the notes. Rests and long notes are among the features of Northern Ewe song whose representation in musical notation requires even more conjecture than is usual. This is obviously because most songs exist in an oral tradition. Although we remarked earlier that Northern Ewe singers generally have trouble sustaining long notes, my transcription is prescriptive rather than descriptive.

The first new words since Phrase 2 of the song appear here. The singer employs something of a redundancy for rhetorical effect: "Call the counsellor to come and see." The need to call the counsellor arises presumably because he is to come, see, offer support, give counsel, or bear witness. To "call him to come and see" therefore embodies a semantic excess. While such redundancies may seem unnecessary in non-poetic language, they are indispensable to the song composer. In this particular context they allow the singer to probe more of the song's purely musical dimensions.

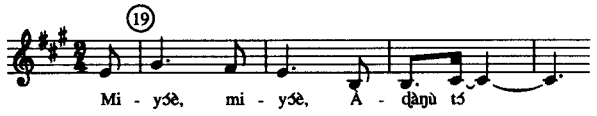
If the previous phrase reached a level of pitch intensity, this one may be said to produce a rhythmic climax, the equivalent of almost "giving up" in the call for a counsellor. Probably the most striking features of the phrase are its retention of the rhythm of the spoken word, and its minimization of departure from speech tone. The monotone setting of *né vá kpɔ́ ɖá* sounds like an intrusion of speech, specifically a verbal exclamation in an otherwise musical context. This phrase also marks the main formal division of the song into two unequal parts: bars 1–14 and bars 14–20.



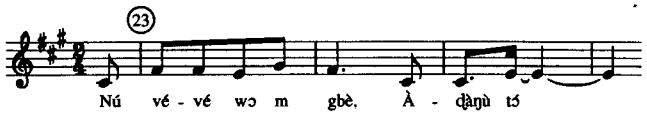
Phrase 6. Miyɔ̀e! Miyɔ̀e! Áɖàŋùtɔ́ ee (Call him! Call him! The counsellor). The beginning of this phrase reminds us that the compositional dynamic, which reached a high point in the previous phrase, continues past the silences. The first *miyɔ̀e* features the highest pitch in the song (B), approached by a less deflated fourth than the one that was sung in bars 4–5. If the previous phrase brought on a feeling of desperation, this one spills over into hysteria. This may partly explain one "infelicitous" detail: the setting of the second *miyɔ̀e* as a descending minor third, which represents the first flat contradiction of the speech-tone pattern of this key word. The subsequent setting of *àɖàŋùtɔ́* achieves a "compromise" by rising first (F♯–G♯) before falling (G♯–E). We return once again to the focal pitch E.

A large network of relationships exists between this sixth phrase and the previous five. The most striking ones are between Phrases 3 and 6. Both have identical words, both have nearly identical rhythm (Phrase 6 extends its final syllable by means of the intensifier and song word *ee*), both begin with a perfect fourth, and both end on the pitch E. And just as Phrase 3 touched on the lowest pitch of the song, B, so this phrase touches on the highest pitch, B, which, not coincidentally, lies exactly one octave above the previous B. Thus the higher B complements the lower one and also establishes the registral limits of the song. From this point on, the rest of the song will traffic in the limits of range and procedure thus established. Connections between Phrases 3 and 6 are further likely to extend to Phrases 4 and 6 since, as was mentioned earlier, Phrase 4

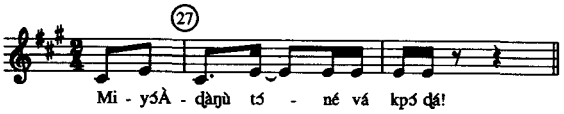
reproduces the words and verbal rhythm of Phrase 3. In fact, there appear to be two trajectories at work in the song, both based on musico-poetic processes. The first encompasses Phrases 1, 2, and 5. The common denominator here is the dyad E–F♯, which undergoes rhythmic activation and progressive embellishment across the three phrases. This is one reason for hearing Phrase 5 as a point of culmination. The second trajectory links together Phrases 3, 4, and 6, which share the same words and involve a gradual rise in pitch level, culminating in the high B of Phrase 6. Of course, the two trajectories, separated here for analytical purposes, are ultimately fused in conveying the dynamic quality of the song.



Phrase 7. Miyɔ̀e! Miyɔ̀e! Àɖàɳùtɔ́ (Call him! Call him! The counsellor). Following closely on the heels of the previous phrase, this one too reproduces the words and verbal rhythm of the by now very familiar verbal phrase. Its function is to provide a preliminary resolution of the tension accumulated at the close of the previous phrase. Accordingly, the music is returned to a lower register while maintaining, in near-sequential fashion, the shape of Phrase 6. We now know that no subsequent utterance can match the intensity of Phrase 6. Phrase 7 brings with it a sense of home going.



Phrase 8. Núvévé wɔm 'gbè. Àɖàɳùtɔ́ (Something painful has happened to me today. Counsellor). As with the new words introduced in Phrases 2 and 5, these ones are semantically redundant. The disclosure that something very painful has happened to the singer must have been inferred by the second bar of the song. On a detailed level, the phrase displays familiar divergences and parallels between speech tone and melody. The word *núvévé*, for example, whose spoken form is HHH, takes on a musical contour of LHH. The rest of the phrase, on the other hand, shows musical and verbal congruence. One sign that things are winding down is the deliberate pacing of the utterance in this phrase. No other phrase contains five successive quavers; indeed, no other durational unit is given such representation at any one time. Although "redundant," however, the singer's words are thrown into relief by the phrase's walking pace. As before, she returns to the key word and anchor *Àɖàɳùtɔ́* to complete the phrase.



Phrase 9. Miyɔ́ àɖàŋùtɔ́ névá kpɔ́ ɖá (Call the counsellor to come and see). When we first heard these words in Phrase 5, they signaled the completion of a larger process, the first "half" of the song. We are right to infer here that they will serve a similar function: the conclusion of the song. This phrase reproduces the words and verbal rhythm of Phrase 5, with slight modifications in pitch to end on E. The same sense of exclamation and resignation is conveyed here. But where Phrase 5 projected the sense of a musical question, this last phrase projects the sense of a subdued question. It is both "open" and "closed."

I have no idea who composed *Àɖàŋùtɔ́*. Not that this would have affected the analysis. I learned it from my aunt, Ms. Renate Nyavor, one evening during September of 1980 in the village of Akpafu-Todzi. By any standards, it is a powerful song: economical in its use of pitch, rhythm, and words, stunning in its quiet intensity, and accessible in its theme, allowing many listeners to identify with it. To reduce it to one of a "class" of laments would be to undervalue its striking features, only some of which have been pointed out here. This is not to deny that one needs the benefit of a horizon in order to measure individuality and originality. I have taken such a horizon for granted, or rather, left it to be constructed from the songs discussed elsewhere in this book.

This excursion into the realm of poetics would seem to leave the world of rhythm far behind. This is as it should be, for rhythm is permanently entangled with other dimensions of song. While characteristic rhythmic formations may be described in isolation, their larger meaning needs to be synthesized from a more complex interaction of musical dimensions. Rhythm provides a way into this more complex world.

4

Rhythms of drumming and dancing

Unlike that of their Southern counterparts, whose rich heritage of drumming and dancing has received adequate representation in scholarly writing, the Northern Ewe's traditions of drumming and dancing are less well known. One reason is the sheer number and diversity of Northern Ewe dances. Whereas *Àtsìagbèkɔ̀*, *Àgbàdzá*, and *Gàhú* have emerged as icons of "complex" Anlɔ drumming, dances such as *Àɖàbàtràm*, *Gàbàɖà*, *Àdèʊ́*, *Òdum*, *Tùidzí*, *Gbòlò*, *Dzòʊ́*, *Lāklèʊ́*, *Pamproʊ́*, and even *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀* have not acquired the same iconic status. The lesser originality of Northern Ewe dances – if that is what it is – stems in part from the pervasive influence of Akan culture, an influence that dates back at least to the nineteenth century. Names (such as Ofori, Addo, Asamoah, Opong, and Mensah), the very institution of hierarchic chieftaincy itself, *Àsàfò* or warrior groups, the phenomenon of talking drums, various musical instruments (*tumpani*) and dance types (*Fontomfrom*, *Adowa*): these and other influences join together to reveal a more than casual presence of Akan traditions within Northern Ewe culture.[1] But while Akan influence is most expressly associated with chiefs, courts, wars, and "serious" matters, other ethnic influences may be detected in the realm of popular culture. To say that Northern Ewe culture is the site of a heterogeneous body of influences is not to discourage the formulation of certain generalizations that may serve to orient us towards the dynamics of their culture and distinguish them from the Southern Ewe. There is, for example, a greater linguistic diversity among the Northern Ewe (nine out of the forty-four Ghanaian languages shown on Dakubu's Language Map of Ghana occur here), they seem more oriented to singing than to drumming, and when they dance, they tend to privilege rapid foot movement over back-breaking movements involving the upper torso.

With only a few exceptions – most notably that of talking drums – drumming among the Northern Ewe is invariably conjoined with movement. This is not to deny the existence of listeners who have heard and internalized drum patterns

and drum styles, and for whom the pleasure of participation lies as much in listening to and admiring an expert drummer's improvisations as in dancing to them. Still, the spontaneity with which movements are begun in response to music, movements ranging from a modest hand clap to an elaborate body turn, adds to the view that, here as in other African cultures, sound and movement are inextricably intertwined. Even the practice of singing hymns and anthems in church is frequently marked by externalized movement. While a literal reading of "Be still, and know that I am your Lord" would seem to permanently discourage singing in the church, many Protestant and Catholic congregations in the Volta Region can hardly get through an anthem or a hymn without the gentlest swaying from side to side. An anecdote may be helpful here. In September of 1976, the E. P. Church sponsored a choral competition at Kpándŏ to select the best church choir in the Volta Region. Each choir had come prepared to perform two set pieces, both by Ephraim Amu: "Alegbegbe" and "Asomdwoem." During his speech as guest speaker for the occasion, Professor Nketia noted that African music is inextricably linked with physical movement, and therefore that those choirs that sang Amu's compositions without moving sympathetically to a regulative beat had missed a crucial dimension of performance. This view seemed to sway the judges, who promptly awarded first place to a choir that had done just that.[2]

Who drums and dances in Northern Ewe society? As in many other African societies, drumming is the exclusive preserve of male members of the society. It seems unimaginable to the Northern Ewe that a woman would, for example, beat a sacred drum like *Àɖàbàtràm*. While such a pattern of exclusion reflects one aspect of the larger societal distribution of power, it is subject to questioning and undermining in artistic circumstances. Thus, the main burden of a performance of *Àdèʊ́*, a hunters' dance, by the Zìaví Zígí group is carried by its female members. By contrast, although dancing is shared by both men and women, women clearly prevail in recreational dances such as *Gbòlò* and *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀*. Such dances provide opportunities for artistic self-expression, and through that, for the establishment of various kinds and intensities of bonding, of which the most important involves male–female interaction in what is almost exclusively a heterosexual society.

The derivative nature of much Northern Ewe drumming suggests that its rhythmic features are not likely to differ fundamentally from those of Akan and Southern Ewe. We may therefore adapt organizational principles associated with the music of these more studied groups to the music of the Northern Ewe. For example, Nketia's tripartite model, which identifies a speech mode, a signal mode, and a dance mode of drumming in Akan communities, applies generally well to the Northern Ewe.[3] Although the three modes are not equally common in Northern Ewe society – the signal mode, for example, is heard only occasionally,

while the speech mode is naturally restricted by the fast-dying (in some cases already dead) practice of talking drums – the model facilitates a synchronic analysis of dance rhythms. Similarly, the polyrhythmic texture that forms the heart of Southern Ewe drumming is also used, albeit with different constituent rhythms, by the Northern Ewe. Since the actual technical principles are readily available in the secondary literature,[4] it makes little sense to repeat them here. Instead, this chapter will begin by describing the context and significance of some prominent Northern Ewe dances and then conclude with a more technically oriented discussion of rhythmic procedure in one dance, *Gbòlò*.[5]

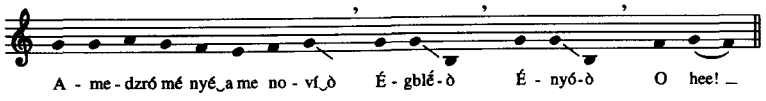
Serious dances

Among the competing schemata for classifying Northern Ewe dances – by rhythmic characteristics, by gender roles, by social function, and by cultural and historical origin – one of the least problematic is by designated mood: serious or sacred as opposed to playful, secular or recreational. Serious dances are associated principally with religion, deity, and war. Their gestures symbolize fundamental belief systems, systems that express the very basis of physical and spiritual life. Serious dances are danced on important festival occasions, at government-induced durbars of chiefs, and to mark important rituals. The dance *Tú*, for example, which may be heard in Matse, is played on a large barrel drum by a single drummer. Its rhythm consists of a short–long pattern that is repeated *ad infinitum*. Its vigorous beating and distinctly hollow sound combine to evoke a "serious" atmosphere. *Tú* celebrates those who have killed a person in battle, fetish priestesses (or *Trɔ̃siwo*), and those who have fathered – but not mothered – twins. When I first saw this dance in September 1986, only one person, a vicious-looking older man with hair completely shaved save for a tiny patch in the middle of his scalp, danced to it. The style of his haircut confirmed that he was one of the town's executioners. On this and other such occasions, it is considered not only inappropriate but downright dangerous for an "unqualified" person to step into the dance ring. "If you are not 'inside,' don't join the dance" is a warning frequently given at performances of such exclusive dances. It is something of a caricature of Ewe society to conjure up scenes of communal dancing in which absolutely no restrictions are placed on who can participate. If such occasions exist, they are by no means more common or more normative than occasions on which some form of exclusivity is demanded. Even recreational dances, which have often fueled images of entire villages dancing, are not entirely free of constraints.

The idea of a "qualified participant" in a musical event should serve as a reminder that the ownership of "space" matters a great deal to the Northern Ewe. It is not merely in the rigidity with which geographical boundaries are

maintained – the recent Tsitó-Pekí land dispute should serve to jolt the lazy memory – but in the ways in which ostensibly public spaces are guarded. For example, at the *itrî* or public space in each Akpafu village, there is a seating space specially marked by an arrangement of stones doubling as seats. Among the restrictions placed on the use of this space is the rule that only "insiders," defined as elders and citizens of Akpafu, may enter the encircled space. Among some Ewe-speaking people, it is said that the distinction between a visitor (*amedzró*) and a home person (*àfétɔ*) may well determine who lives or dies when a particular event, such as the death of an important chief, calls for human sacrifice. That is why a popular Ewe chant that accompanies serious dances says that "a visitor is not a sibling" (Example 4.1). A colloquial way of framing this is that "blood is thicker than water," meaning that ways of treating one's brothers and sisters do not necessarily coincide with ways of treating visitors. The extraordinary generosity with which the Northern Ewe receive visitors should not lead one to undervalue the number of levels, types, and styles of their discourses that lie beyond the reach of the outsider.

Another Northern Ewe dance, also subject to restrictions like *Tú*, but much more widely performed, is *Dzòʊ́* or *Trɔ̃ʊ́*. (*Dzò* [lit. fire] refers to fetish, power, or charm while *Trɔ̃* refers to a force or god that is worshiped. *ʊ* means both drum and the dance/music.) I have seen *Dzòʊ́* performed in Pekí-Dzake, Pekí-Avetile, and Avènúi-Awudome, while others have reported it in Hohoe, Alavanyo, Matse, Have, and elsewhere. *Dzòʊ́* is music performed by men and women who worship African gods and goddesses – practitioners of "Traditional African Religion," as the writers of textbooks refer to them. They belong to particular sects, obey a certain code of behavior in dress, food, and work patterns, and express their religious identity in a diversity of ways. *Trɔ̃* or *Dzò* worshippers in a particular area often come together on important occasions to sing, drum, dance, and altogether affirm their faith in traditional religion.



Example 4.1. Ewe warrior chant

Every performance of *Dzòʊ́*, like the performance of any serious dance, begins with the pouring of libation. Then follows the drumming, singing and dancing. Apart from the relatively fast pace at which it is performed, there is nothing uniquely distinctive about *Dzòʊ́* as such. The music in this case is only one of several ingredients that create the exciting atmosphere. Only those who belong to one of the sects may join in the dancing. The fact that we are dealing with a religious calling suggests that there can be no strict prescriptions about the dancing: one dances as the spirit directs. In general, however, the dance

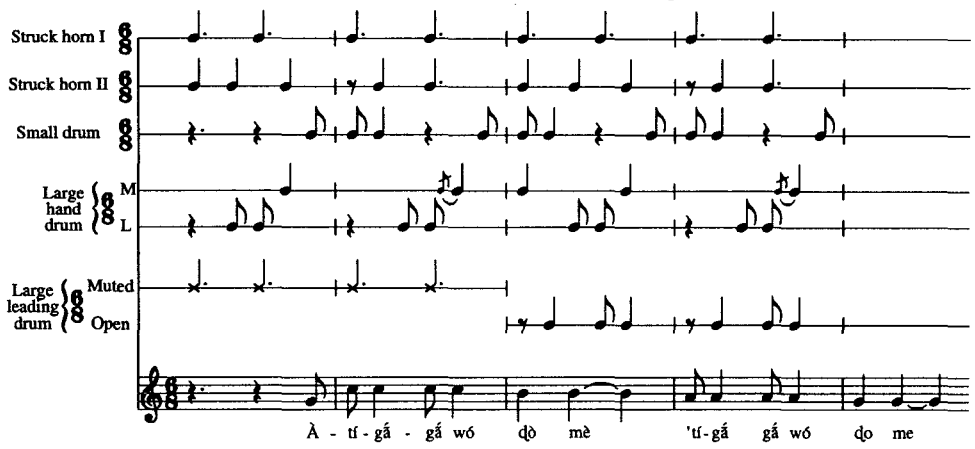
gestures are short, sharp, and often jerky. They are like quick thrusts, and involve mainly use of the hands, with legs maintaining balance.

Rarely is *Dzòʊ́ú* performed without someone entering into a state of trance. In this context, altered states are, of course, possible only within specified belief systems and a disposition towards being possessed. During a performance of *Dzòʊ́ú* in August 1986 in Pekí-Avetile, a woman lost consciousness and was said to have entered a state of trance. (Only a day before this happened, the snub-nosed woman, who was also an enthusiastic singer and dancer of recreational music, had been pointed out to me as susceptible to trance.) It took a local herbalist and spiritualist a good half hour, several agitated and apparently desperate invocations, and the assistance of other members of the sect, to bring the woman out of her supposed coma. While all this was happening, the dancing of *Dzòʊ́ú* continued unperturbed.

The *Dzòʊ́ú* musical ensemble varies in size from village to village. It may consist of two to four drums, one or two bells, and scores of singers. Unlike the explicitly choreographed dances of the Southern Ewe, *Dzòʊ́ú* is constituted by fragments of drama, fragments whose patterns, although individually negotiated, are nevertheless enacted in full knowledge of a certain commonality in the object and objective of worship. The instrumental texture, once established, tends not to change. Different songs are "exchanged" over this texture. Indeed, the refrain "Osee Yee," which returns to mark off large periods of the dance, serves as an energizer, each occurrence raising the "pitch" of the performance by a notch. To this cumulative process may be added the noises made by dancers, noises that emanate not only from their physical movements, but also from the frequent shouts and ululations that *Dzòʊ́ú* performers seem unable to do without. From time to time, somebody in the group will break off a twig from a nearby tree and crush the leaves over the head of a particularly active dancer. This gesture recognizes an impressive dancer or helps to "cool off" one who is working him or herself into trance. Like *Tú*, *Dzòʊ́ú* is an insiders' dance. Onlookers may not join in. If they do, they run the risk of losing their sanity or falling ill.

One of the best known of "serious" Northern Ewe dances is *Àdèʊ́ú*, a form of "bravery dance." *Àdèʊ́ú* is a hunters' dance that may be seen in practically every town or village in which there are organized groups of hunters: Ho, Hohoe, Aɖaklu, Ve, Àvènúi, Sokoɖe, Mátse, Kpándǒ, Abutia, and Pekí. The instrumental ensemble resembles that for *Dzòʊ́ú*: drums, rattles, bells, and voices. When the *À dèʊ́ú* ensemble has been fully activated, we hear a texture like that shown in Example 4.2, in which each instrumental layer has its own rhythmic pattern, but the ensemble as a whole is governed by a common tactus or regulative beat.[6]

The subject of *Àdèʊ́ú* determines the nature of its choreography. Like the music of *Dzòʊ́ú*, that of *Àdèʊ́ú* functions as a background to a foreground dance drama – a full-scale enactment of a successful hunt. A typical performance might



Example 4.2. Fragment of *Àdèǒu* music (transcribed by Anthony Adanua)

go something like this. Members of the hunters' association, dressed in hunting attire (usually a dark brown, green, or black color, to escape easy detection in the forest), assemble in an open space to perform. After the pouring of libation, a lead singer, singing in a declamatory style, recounts a number of heroic deeds. Then the instrumental ensemble is activated and dancers take the floor in turn or in small groups. Typically, a dancer will mime the journey from home to the forest along a bush path. As soon as he sees or hears an animal, he assumes the most appropriate position from which to shoot: this may be a standing or kneeling position. While waiting to focus on the target, he may need to fend off bees, ants, and other insects. Eventually he takes aim, shoots, and kills the animal. He cuts off its head and, perhaps with the help of other hunters or an apprentice hunter, carries the carcass back to the village. After the appropriate purification rituals have been performed, there is a village-wide celebration of this show of bravery and manliness.

In enacting this drama, participants both entertain and educate themselves and their non-participating audience in the hunt culture. The tenor of a performance may be raised when a real-life hunter, perhaps one who is known to have killed a wild animal instead of just a few bush rats, enters the ring to dance. In such moments, the gap between art and life is undermined as the play element is foregrounded.

Although there are variations in the way that *Àdèǒú* is performed, the essence of the rhythmic ensemble remains invariable. It is to this continuing background that dancers perform a hunt or fragments of a hunt. A performance I saw in Àvènúi in September of 1986 followed the model described above. Not only was this an outdoor performance, but the dance arena was so wide that the lead dancer took nearly an hour to complete the hunt narrative. In other performances, however, especially those that have been adapted for a stage, the explicit narrative is replaced by a set of shorter, competing narratives. I saw an example of the latter

in a performance of the Miwɔe Nényó Hábɔbɔ̌ of Pekí-Blengo in 1986. Performers formed a semi-circle from which individual dancers went in and out of the dance arena. Two men and a woman, one with a cutlass, another with a horse whip, a third with a gun, led the dancing. They would enter the dancing area, enact deeds associated with the hunt or with bravery, and return to the semi-circle for a breather. The one with the cutlass dragged it across the dancing ground, kindling a spark or two in the process. Another fired a shot into the air, while the third pretended to be cutting off an animal's head. These actions, which were enhanced by shouts and grunts, contributed a sense of urgency to the occasion. In the best cases, an *Àdèʋ́ú* performance sends chills down the spines of the audience.

As in any such artistic form, *Àdèʋ́ú* allows a certain amount of improvisation within the general theme of bravery. I have seen dancers mime acts of bravery that are, however, not directly related to the hunt. Expert *Àdèʋ́ú* dancers are not necessarily those who provide the most realistic portrayals of the hunt, but those who interpret the call to realism as an opportunity to extend the boundaries of the real.

The most serious of Northern Ewe dances, the most awe-inspiring, and certainly the most feared, is *Àɖàbàtràm* (Amoaku glosses the word as *àɖàbà* = insanity, *tràm* = to go astray).[7] The word has three referents: the drum itself, the music (including dance) played by the drum, and the ancestral spirit personified by the drum. Like *Dzòʋ́ú* and *Àdèʋ́ú*, *Àɖàbàtràm* is widely performed: Ho, Lume, Dzolo, Hohoe, Zìaví, Akoefe, Tanyigbe, Hlefi, Dodome, and Mátse are among the places where it may be found.

The drum *Àɖàbàtràm* is a hollowed-out tree trunk, about four feet high, and having a single head, this last covered by animal skin. Draped around the head of the drum is a brownish cloth containing calabash-like objects. These objects are believed to be human skulls obtained during past wars. Part of what is symbolized by *Àɖàbàtràm*, then, is the military prowess of the people. *Àɖàbàtràm* is played with two curved sticks. It may be beaten while the drum is standing on the ground, or while it is being carried by a special carrier in the course of a procession. It is believed that whenever it has to be beaten, *Àɖàbàtràm* elects a carrier, possesses him – for it is always a man – and brings him to the scene of performance. From the moment in which an individual carrier is possessed until the moment in which the drumming and dancing are over, the carrier surrenders, hypnotic fashion, to the persona of the drum. It is *Àɖàbàtràm* who dictates where the carrier should go, at what pace, when and where to stop, and so on. The task (and privilege) of carrying *Àɖàbàtràm* is, of course, a serious spiritual and cultural assignment, and falls only to individuals steeped in traditional religion and belief systems.

Unlike *Dzòʋ́ú*, the performance of which is determined by the order of events on the traditional religious calendar, and unlike *Àdèʋ́ú*, which, despite its

seriousness, may be construed as a form of entertainment close in character to a recreational dance, *Àɖàbàtràm* is played to mark "serious" occasions only. For example, it is played as part of the funeral celebration of an important chief, to mark the commencement of a harvest festival, during the celebration of the wall-breaking rite or *Glìgbàzã́*, or to commemorate a military victory. On each such occasion, *Àɖàbàtràm* is taken on a procession through the town or village. *Àɖàbàtràm* walks, stops, turns around, and takes detours, and there is no predicting which paths the drum will take. Each procession invariably conveys a mood of unsettlement which in turn elicits fear. Observers are usually advised to keep a safe distance from the advancing drum and its entourage. One dare not cross the drum's path. It is said that in the old days, you risked having your head chopped off if you crossed the path of *Àɖàbàtràm*. It is perhaps a vestige of this earlier practice that today, any domestic animals or pets – chickens, ducks, goats, or dogs – that stray into the path of the drum are immediately killed and carried off (to be eaten later).

The music of *Àɖàbàtràm* is performed principally on the drum itself, often in an ensemble with two or three little drums. Once the instrumental texture has been assembled in the usual additive way, it is maintained throughout the performance. Various war slogans are chanted. "He himself brought himself" may refer to someone who was killed in battle, while "Whether it is good, or whether it is bad, we don't care" conveys a spirit of reckless abandon. These and other utterances have as their purpose to consolidate the sense of a community's military prowess by verbally intimidating others, taunting potential enemies, and recalling battles previously won.

All this talk of war and battles, and of heads being chopped off and skulls being attached to drums, is by now part of Ewe mythology, records of a constructed Ewe past. Except for minor skirmishes, there have been no major wars in Northern Eweland in the last half-century or so. To consign these deeds to the past, and thus to suggest that many of the people who sing of heroic deeds today know them less from actual experience than from a performed historical record, should not lead one to conclude that the Ewe believe any less in the power and significance of *Àɖàbàtràm*. It is rather to highlight a Northern Ewe investment, mainly affective, in a body of historical knowledge that enables them to reinforce their sense of military security and to establish, indeed celebrate, a continuity with the on-going "lives" of their ancestors.

As a child growing up in Ho, I knew of *Àɖàbàtràm*. As a minister's son, I never saw *Àɖàbàtràm*, but heard its music from a distance. Only as an adult researcher did I see and record *Àɖàbàtràm* in Ho and in Zìaví. What follows is a brief narrative of the Zìaví event.

I had asked the chief and elders of Zìaví if they might show members of my research team and me aspects of their culture, especially those occasional

aspects that we would most likely miss in the course of a routine visit to the village. They agreed, and the beating of *Àḍàbàtràm* was to form an important component of this display. A ceremony was planned for the afternoon of 12 September 1986, to take place on the grounds of the local middle school, where there was a wide open field that could accommodate many people. The chief and his elders arrived around 2 p.m. and took their seats according to customary protocol. Also in attendance was the *Àsàfò* group, armed with cutlasses, guns, and other weapons, which they brandished about somewhat recklessly. The *Àsàfò* group formed a protective circle around the drum *Àḍàbàtràm*. Then the drumming began, accompanied by the chanting of war songs. After about twenty minutes, we heard shouts and saw what appeared to be a violent struggle in the bushes nearby. Soon, a youngish man, no more than five feet tall, was being literally dragged to the scene of the ceremony by three strong men. He had been "chosen" to carry *Àḍàbàtràm* on that occasion. He was struggling to free himself, but his captors easily overpowered him. His clothes were taken off and replaced by warrior clothes, and he was offered a drink of water which he refused. He seemed to be calming down and accepting his fate. Then the leader of the warriors poured libation to the following prayer:

Oo, chief *Àḍàbàtràm*, chief *Àḍàbàtràm*
Your water it is, for you to drink
It is nothing
You are very surprised that today you have been brought here to be beaten
Aa, you yourselves told us the other day that people's eyes are open
So we are doing things according to today's open eyes
They say that government has sent somebody
We cannot hide it (our culture) inside the pocket
So our bringing you here today, the fourth day of the week
Do not be rough
They want to learn something about you
Take your time slowly
Let your heart be cool
Here is your water
Aa, this carrying of you today
Let no evil come in
Let your carrier be strong, let him take his time
And whatever it is they want to see, let them see it
I don't want you to go into the town
We want you to remain here
The way you display, you can display even here for them to see
But I don't want you to go into the town.

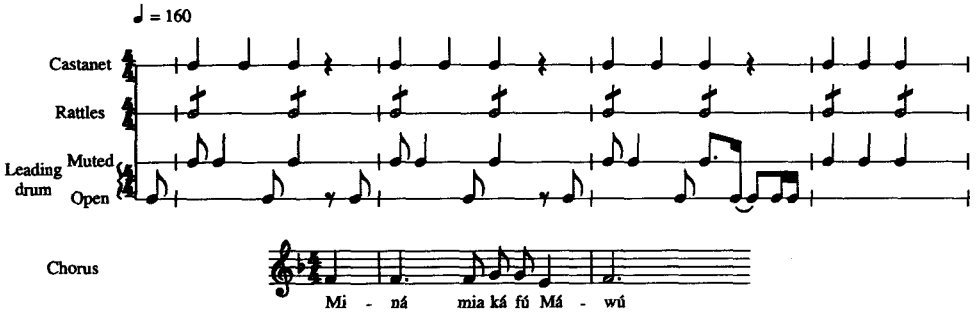
In addition to exemplifying some aspects of Northern Ewe narrative strategy (recall the discussion in Chapter 2), this prayer provides further insight into the relationship between the people and the drum. *Àɖàbàtràm* is addressed as "Tɔ́gbé" or chief at the beginning, a respected, living entity. By the end of the excerpt, however, he is being instructed, as if the hierarchy were inverted. He is to refrain from going into the town as this is likely to wreak havoc: people run helter-skelter to escape this much-feared drum. The language of this portion of the prayer is direct and uncompromising: "I don't want you to go into the town." The reversal in mode of address is resonant with another transformation in the prayer: the sense of a tradition becoming modern. Here, as in other Ewe and Akpafu prayers, reference is made to "today's open eyes," a new vision of society and culture mediated by the modernizing influence of white people, Christian missionaries, and especially, Western-style formal education. Here, "open eyes" are associated with the post-colonial "government," which has sent its representatives to learn about Zìaví culture. (This, of course, was literally incorrect, but such errors, produced unintentionally, are unlikely to offend the gods, and so are overlooked in the context of a formal narration.) But it is the preservers of the tradition who acknowledge the importance of "progressive" thinking: "You [gods and ancestors] yourselves told us the other day that people's eyes are open." There is, then, a sense of perpetual renewal, as an "old tradition" becomes modern and is replaced by a new modernity as the old modernity becomes tradition.

After the prayer, a rousing chant, "Osee Yee!", was sung, followed immediately by drumming. The drum *Àɖàbàtràm*, weighing probably fifty pounds, was lifted by four men and placed on the head of the designated carrier, who by this time looked as if he was resigned to his fate. For the next hour or so, the music of *Àɖàbàtràm* continued non-stop. The drum walked backwards, forwards, and sideways, exploring practically all the spaces on or around the playing field, sometimes venturing beyond. At one point, the drum stopped to chastise Tɔ́gbé Ayím IV, Paramount Chief of Zìaví, for bringing him out unnecessarily. The tenor of the occasion was high, and everyone present – men, women, and children – talked, shouted, laughed, cried, ran backwards in fear, and so on.

Events like this do not formally close; they simply dissipate gradually. And so it was with this performance of *Àɖàbàtràm*. As evening approached, the crowd grew smaller, the noise level began to diminish, and *Àɖàbàtràm* was whisked away to his resting place. The chief, sub-chiefs, and elders picked up their chairs and returned to their homes.

Recreational dances

Unlike serious dances, most of which belong to a tradition that reaches far into the past, many (though by no means all) recreational dances are of relatively



Example 4.3. Fragment of *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀* music

recent coinage; they more obviously bear the marks of post-colonial Ghana. *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀* is a well-known example of a recreational dance. It is thought to have originated in Kpando, where its leading exponents, such as Mr. Nuatro, may still be found today. *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀* is performed by an ensemble of bells, drums, rattles, a chorus of singers, and a group of dancers. A bugle or hand bell may be used occasionally to energize the group. *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀* is a relatively slow dance whose movements are meant to be sexually suggestive. Female dancers bend at the waist towards the ground, emphasizing feet and hand movement, while projecting their buttocks high into the air. Dance steps are simple and repetitive, and each singer carries a pair of white handkerchiefs that goes up from time to time as part of the choreography, an indication that a period in the drumming has been completed.

The musical sources of *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀* songs include Africanized hymns and popular or pop tunes from elsewhere in Africa, Europe, and America, each adapted to an Ewe text. Example 4.3 (CD track 20) is an excerpt from a 1986 performance by Mr. Nuatro's group of *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀*-Highlife. Like other Ewe ensembles, it uses a polyrhythmic texture in which castanets and rattles play simpler, fixed patterns while the lead drum beats patterns of greater complexity. The song, "Miná miakáfú Máwú" (Let us praise God), is in the tradition of hymn singing.

A more musically distinctive recreational dance indigenous to the Northern Ewe is *Gàbàɖà*. It is performed throughout Northern Eweland, especially in Wusuta, Anfoega, Peki, Have, Botoku, Matse, and Ho. Mr. Kissiedu has traced the origin of *Gàbàɖà* to the village of Wusuta, and to a man by the name Hodomenu Kɔsi, alias Vigbon. In some places, *Gàbàɖà* is known by a different name, *Égbanígbà*. Although these two dances are almost indistinguishable to the lay observer, experts maintain that they are different from each other.[8]

The names "*Gàbàɖà*" and "Égbanígbà" have interesting histories. According to Kissiedu, who cites a woman from the town of Wusuta near Hohoe as his main source (he interviewed her in 1973), *Gàbàɖà* refers to a type of jùjú or charm used to seduce women. "They have placed *Gàbàɖà* on her" ("Wo do Gabaɖae") might be said of a woman who has been seduced by members of the *Gàbàɖà* performing group. "Égbanígbà" also refers to sex. The word may be glossed as

"If it is broken, let it be broken." According to Mr. Kissiedu, the woman from Wúsútă – who, incidentally, claimed to be one of the founding members of the original *Gàbàɖà* group in Wusuta – said that in the early days of *Gàbàɖà*, as a result of the serious seduction that was taking place in their town, women, especially wives, became reluctant to join the group. The membership of the group dwindled to three. It was at this point that the remaining women resolved to stay on for the sake of the music and dance. Staying on implied that they would continue to indulge liberally in sexual activity. They simply did not care if the "parts" got "broken" in the process – hence the name, "If it is broken, let it be broken."

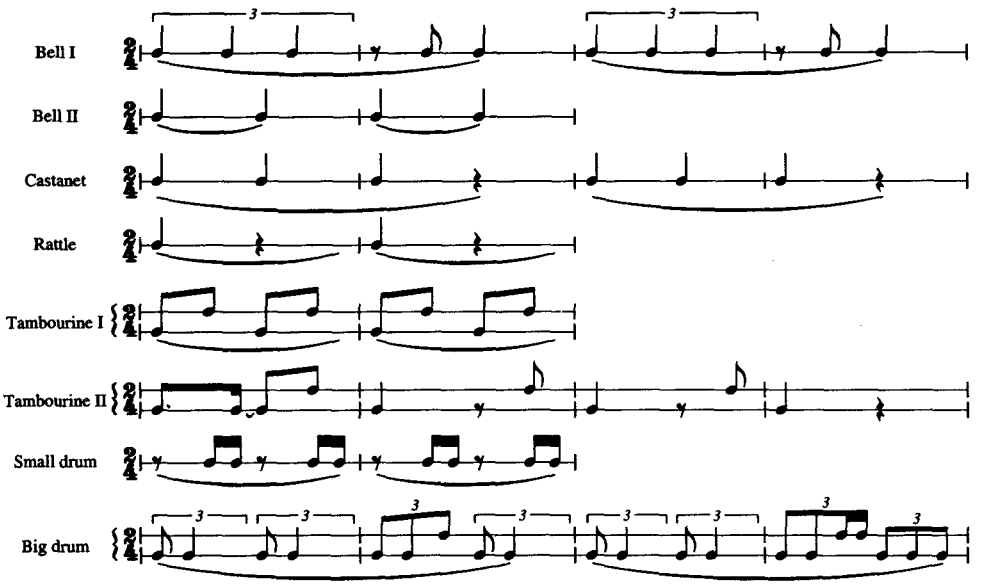
Gàbàɖà is a social dance, not a religious one. Unlike "serious" dances, which are severely restricted in terms of who can participate, *Gàbàɖà* is less so. This does not mean that there are not less and more able dancers or drummers. It is rather an indication of how performances readily invite communal participation. *Gàbàɖà* is performed in parks, on village arenas, and on compounds of usually wealthy patrons. Depending on the group and the occasion, a *Gàbàɖà* performance can attract anything from twenty or thirty people to a couple of hundred.

Like *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀*, *Gàbàɖà* is played by an ensemble of drums, bells, and rattles. As always, there are slight regional variations in the make-up of the ensemble. In Have, for instance, the ensemble consists of a principal drum (*àsíʊ́ gã̄*), smaller drum (*àsíʊ́ ví*), tambourine (*tamale*), two bells (*gànkógúi*), castanet (*krétsiwé*), and as many rattles as there are women.

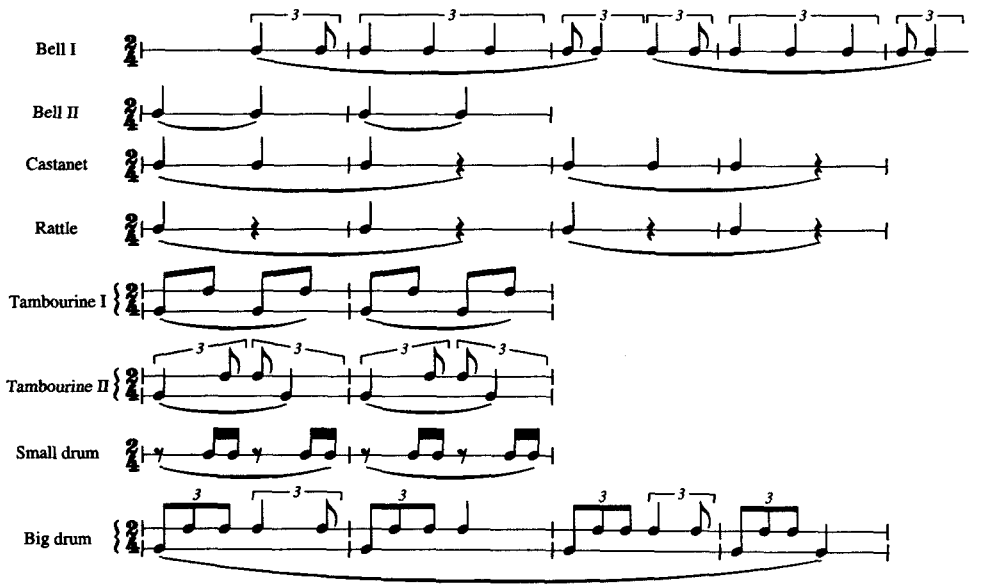
The macro structure of *Gàbàɖà* exemplifies a free–strict or slow–fast rhythmic pattern. A typical performance begins with a sung section in free rhythm which is often partly improvised. This introduction serves three purposes: to "warm up" the ensemble, to announce the beginning of the event, and to provide verbal/philosophical food for thought. The first thing we hear is the lead singer intoning a phrase, which is immediately echoed by the chorus, only this time in harmony (usually parallel thirds or sixths, with occasional voice-crossing especially in the approach to cadences). After a few minutes of this opening song, the instrumental ensemble is set in motion, and the dancing begins. If words and their meanings reigned in the introductory singing, music and its meanings – mainly the play of rhythms – dominate the rest of the dance.

Examples 4.4 and 4.5 quote from Esther Ofori's transcriptions of the twin dances, *Gàbàɖà* and *Égbanígbà*, first to show the rhythmic texture of each dance, and second to point to differences between them: their identifying rhythms, played on Bell 1, differ, as do the improvisatory patterns produced by the big drum. A lot of the "filler" material, however, is common to both dances.[9]

Gàbàɖà is now danced by men as well as women. Like *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀*, and in keeping with its original purpose and function described above, it is a flirtatious and sexually suggestive dance. Movement is, by design, anti-clockwise. Unlike



Example 4.4. Fragment of *Gàbàḍà* music (transcribed by Esther Ofori)



Example 4.5. Fragment of *Égbaníbà* music (transcribed by Esther Ofori)

Southern Ewe dances such as *Àgbàdzá* and *Àgbèkɔ̀*, whose choreographic emphasis is on the upper torso, and unlike the Akan *Adowa* which emphasizes both feet and arms, *Gàbàḍà* emphasizes foot movement. The challenge for the dancer is to correlate rapid foot movement with a steady rhythm, while acknowledging other dancers by means of hand gestures and the waving of white handkerchiefs.

There are, of course, many more dances than we can discuss here (my own list begins with *Àlìkà*, a puberty dance performed in Pekí, and includes a whole slew of Akpafu serious dances like *Prèndòn*, *Ɔtutuo*, and *Ìtèpère* as well as recreational dances like *Ilikpi* and *Sidzamoe*).[10] But before we turn to the last of our recreational dances, *Gbòlò*, we need to acknowledge a body of dances which, although indigenous to other ethnic groups, are nevertheless danced regularly by some Northern Ewe. These dances may or may not feature in a discussion of "Northern Ewe Music" but they cannot be excluded from a discussion of "Music in Northern Eweland."

Trade, education, and organized religion have increased the degree of interaction among constituent Northern Ewe groups, and between them and other cultural groups. It is therefore not surprising to encounter "foreign" dances performed not only by immigrants but by the "locals" themselves. The major source of borrowed dances is, not surprisingly, the Southern Ewe. In the regional capital, Ho, for instance, it is not only members of immigrant Anlo communities who regularly perform *Àgbàdzá*, *Àtsìagbèkɔ*, and *Gàhú*, but also so-called "cultural groups," formed throughout Ghana in the 1960s and 1970s for the purpose of storing and disseminating aspects of traditional culture, and in the process undermining some of the less productive ethnic boundaries. The repertoire of the Y.M.C.A. cultural group at Ho, for example, includes the Southern Ewe dances *Àgbèkɔ* and *Gàhú*, the Northern Ghana dances *Damba* and *Nagla*, and the Akan dance *Adowa*. In Akpafu-Todzi, one may still hear a dance called *Gòmlì*, a distinctly Anlɔ dance in the style of singing, in the large-scale structure of *hàtsíatsía* followed by a main dancing section, in the composition of the instrumental ensemble, and in the back-breaking dance gestures reminiscent of *Àgbàdzá*. Oral sources say that *Gòmlì* has been in Akpafu for at least sixty years.

Primary and middle schools constitute another important site of cultural or interethnic synthesis. Competitions are frequently organized to find the most effective performance of an aspect of traditional culture. And in preparing for such competitions, schools are encouraged to diversify their repertories by including dances from elsewhere in Ghana, and sometimes from places further afield like Togo, Benin, and Nigeria. At Pekí-Tsame Middle School, for instance, pupils in 1986 were performing Akan, Ga-Adangbe, and Dagbon dances, in addition to both Northern and Southern Ewe dances. There is an as yet unwritten chapter in African music reception in which the intricate processes of interethnic borrowing and appropriation will be studied for what they tell us about creativity in the indigenous culture.

One of the most popular recreational dances indigenous to the Northern Ewe is *Gbòlò*. Although its principal exponents are found in Pekí and Hohoe, *Gbòlò* is now danced in, among other places, Ho, Zìaví, Akpafu Mempeasem, Ve, Avatime, and Gbi. The word "gbòlò" means "love" or "loved one," which suggests that

the dance may once have been associated with relationships between the sexes. This implication apparently conflicts with the fact that *Gbòlò* texts are predominantly about death – celebrating the passing of an older, respected person, recounting another's virtues, and reminding the rest of the living that they, too, will one day join their ancestors. Other *Gbòlò* texts chastise anti-social members of society or ridicule disgraceful behavior. There is, in other words, no overriding emphasis on love or sex in contemporary song texts that would match the name of the dance. Still, the conflict is neither surprising nor unusual. The inevitableness and mystery of death inspire a vast range of artistic responses, and a vibrant recreational dance is merely one such response. The fact that the dance which accompanies singing about death provides opportunities for men and women to meet and pursue intimate relationships only tells of another manifestation of the love–death motif in Ewe culture.

In the most comprehensive study of *Gbòlò* to date – to which my own account is greatly indebted – W. I. C. Dowoeh alludes to some of the ideological battles fought between originators of the *Gbòlò* in towns like Pekí and Hohoe and Christian missionaries.[11] As in other encounters between missionaries and the local people, the Ewe were discouraged from performing their own music because it represented "pagan consciousness." It took a few courageous individuals to resist the missionary's censure. Invariably, all who joined *Gbòlò* groups were those who placed their faith in one form or other of traditional African religion. The situation has changed in the last three decades, and pagans and Christians alike beat and dance *Gbòlò*.

Like other Northern Ewe recreational dances, *Gbòlò* is performed by voices and instruments. Traditionally all female, some *Gbòlò* groups now admit men as drummers and even as dancers, although the center is composed of women. Each woman carries an *akayɛ* or rattle which is used to beat a pulse for the dance. The other invariant instrument is the *ʊ̀ùgá* or big drum, the main drum of the ensemble, which combines in a polyrhythmic texture with the rhythms produced by rattles, voices, bells, and other (optional) instruments. Changes in popular culture have left more of an impression on recreational dances than on serious dances. Dowoeh describes the bands in Pekí-Blengo and Pekí-Àvètíle as incorporating non-traditional instruments such as castanets, double-pronged bells (*gankogui*), and hourglass drum (*ɖònɖón*).

The music of *Gbòlò* is vibrant and energetic, and is accompanied by slightly slower, more graceful movement reminiscent in parts of the slow and dignified Akan *Adowa*. Like *Gàbàɖà*, a performance begins typically with a lead singer's introductory song, which is usually in speech rhythm. Then the dance proper begins. A faster tempo, regular meter, and a vigorous Call–Response mode mark the transition. Once the full texture is established (which takes about ten minutes), it is maintained until the dance is over. Along the way different songs

are introduced, dancers take turns to enter the dancing ring, and the lead drummer reaches peaks of virtuosic drumming.

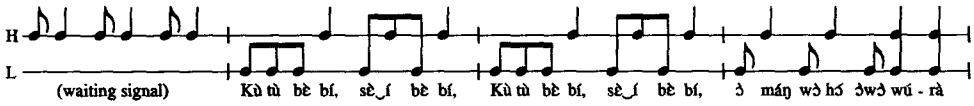
We will explore the dynamics of performing space more fully in the next chapter, but it is worth noting here that performances of *Gbòlò* often use a horseshoe formation, allowing the dancers to move in and out of the dancing space in turns. The audience, meanwhile, quietly participates in the event. Dancing is in unisex pairs, and involves an alternation of leg movement: the right leg moves twice, the left leg does the same, the right leg moves twice again, and so on, in constant alternation. Within this basic structure are several options for hand and arm movement. Dowoeh refers to "proverbial gestures" performed by the hands, gestures that communicate such messages as "I am lonely" or "I have lost all my children."[12]

Rhythmic procedure in Northern Ewe drumming

Before we turn to a more detailed account of the rhythmic structure of *Gbòlò* it might be helpful to step back from the foregoing description of the overall profiles of Northern Ewe dances and develop a framework for understanding the range of rhythmic procedures discussed so far. Three general types of rhythmic procedure may be identified in Northern Ewe drumming. Each type is marked by a greater or lesser degree of dependency on the spoken word. The three types span the continuum from free to strict. Type 1, which involves the use of drums as speech surrogates, is exemplified by the practice of talking drums. Type 2 deals with both the iconic and the symbolic dimensions of communication within the dance. Finally, Type 3 encompasses the purely musical play of rhythms in dance, an autonomous mode with no necessary communicative obligations.[13]

Type 1. The practice of using drums as speech surrogates appears not to be indigenous to the Northern Ewe but rather to have been borrowed from the Akan. In general, wherever talking drums or Tumpani (from Twi *Atumpan*) are used, the drum language is not Ewe but Twi. Some Ewe drummers of course understand Twi, and so are able to explain what they are "saying" on the drums. There are many others, however, who do not understand Twi, and who therefore treat drum patterns as "symbols" or signs in which the relationship between signifier and signified is conventional or arbitrary.

The basic principle of talking drumming is simple and straightforward: rhythmic and tonal patterns of spoken language are reproduced on a drum. This practice refers mainly to the "speech" and "signal" modes of Nketia's tripartite model. The viability of a "speech mode" in Northern Ewe practice is, however, undermined by the performative nature of speech acts. When, for example, the sub-chief credited with "owning" the town (the so-called Mankrado) of Akpafu-



Example 4.6. Akpafu-Adɔ̀kɔ̀ talking drum signal

Adɔ̀kɔ̀ hears the drum pattern shown in Example 4.6 (CD track 21), he understands that he is being summoned to the village center. Although the message is given in speech mode or "ordinary language," it is something of a secret code, known only by drummer and Mankrado, which in turn gives it symbolic status, pushing it, in Nketia's terms, towards the signal mode. However, as a result of frequent public usage, the code is now known to others in the community. So, while the drum pattern includes an iconic transfer from speech patterns, it is also *symbolically* associated with this particular sub-chief.

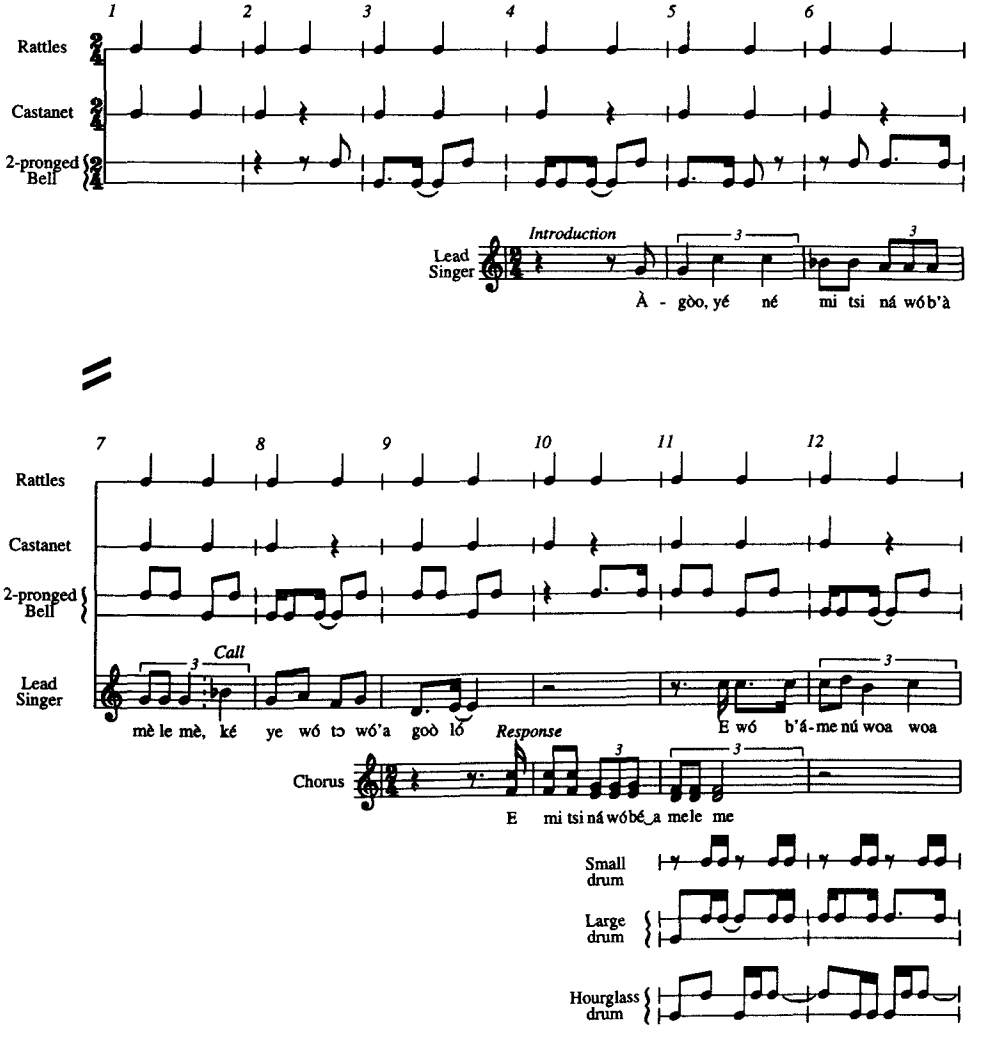
In its diverse manifestations speech is, of course, subject to certain performative constraints. Consider a familiar constraint, namely, the fact that it is rarely possible to make simple propositional statements in drum language, and that all utterances must be coded. Coding may entail the inclusion of phatic signs, such as a two-beat, monotone drum pattern that begins, punctuates intermittently, and concludes drummed messages. We might say then, that talking drums expose coded speech rather than plain speech, and that they necessarily speak in a poetic language rather than in ordinary language. To accept this less simple proposition is to accept some degree of overlap between the first and second types of rhythmic procedure.[14]

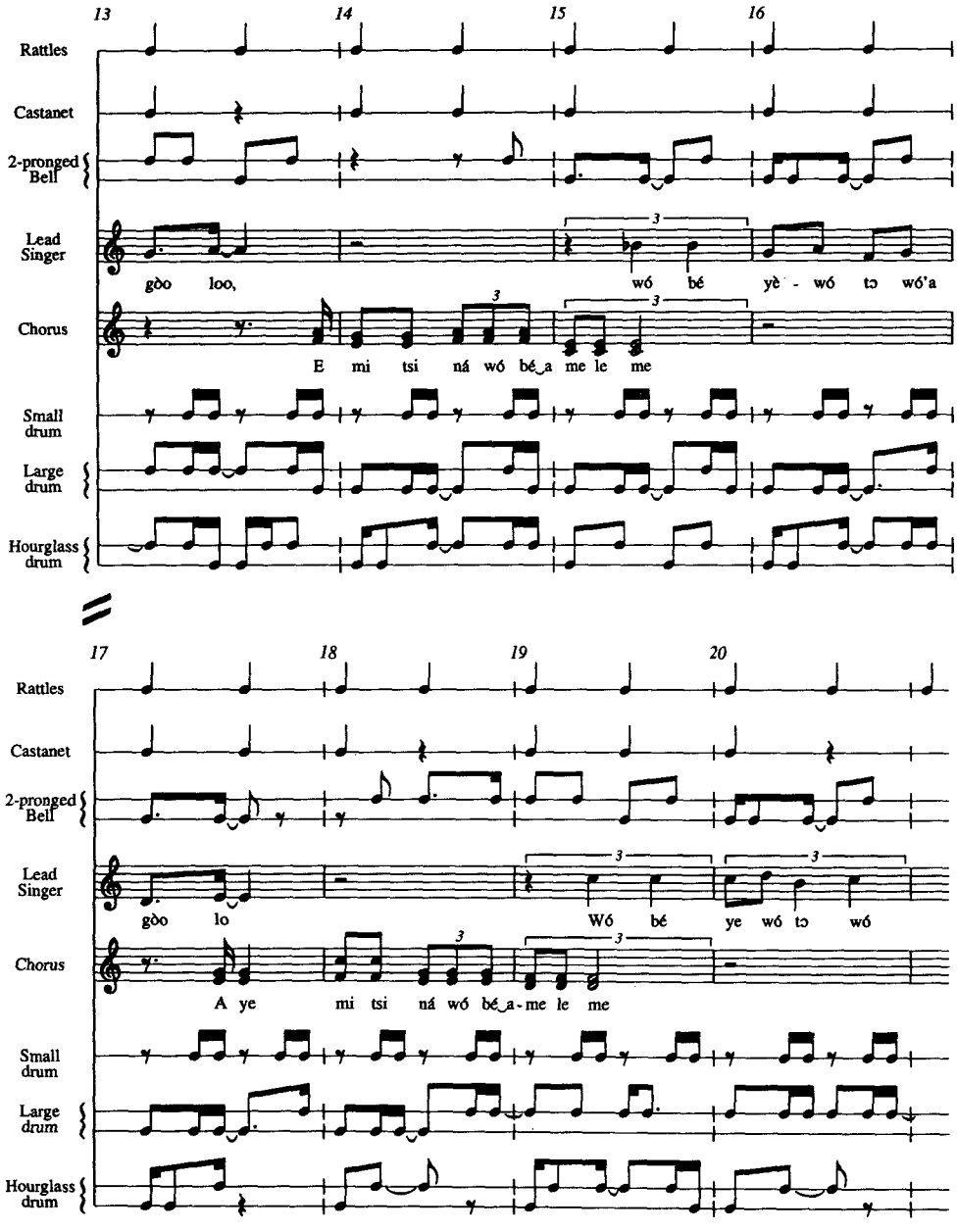
Type 2. Symbols or conventional signs are often used to convey information to dancers. An elaborate instance of this occurs in the Southern Ewe dance *Àtsìagbèkɔ̀*. In order to choreograph a set of stylized responses to the general subject of war, the dancers respond to a set of previously agreed-upon signals. Although a dimension of ordinary language may be evident in these signals, they are not designed to facilitate conversation as such: the system of communication is largely, but by no means exclusively, one-way. In semiotic terms, modes of drumming in *Àtsìagbèkɔ̀* exemplify partial iconism (as for example, when the rhythmic patterns of speech are reproduced without their tonal dimensions) and symbolism (as when an agreed-upon signal that does not sound like anything in ordinary language is recognized by dancers).

It should be obvious by now that the model of rhythmic expression introduced at the close of Chapter 1, and to which we shall return in Chapter 7, although helpful at a preliminary level of discussion, exaggerates certain adjacent dependencies. For example, although there is no doubting the general influence of language on drumming, there are aspects of drumming that are not necessarily generated by language. We must therefore acknowledge a "break" in the model, a moment in which a "purely musical" impulse, unfettered to a

lexical item, comes into its own. It is for this reason that a third category of rhythmic procedure – rhythm for rhythm's sake – is needed.

Type 3. There should be nothing surprising about the Northern Ewe interest in exploring rhythms for rhythms' sake. Audiences delight in such explorations, of course. On hearing a particularly good drummer, they may show appreciation by pasting money on his forehead, shouting slogans, or dancing on the spot. The purely musical cultivation of rhythms is a viable mode of expression, one that is subject only to the impermanent constraints of a Northern Ewe musical system. Although music-making remains an essentially communal activity, it liberates rather than constrains the eager constructor of purely musical rhythms. No wonder lead drummers, expert dancers, and singers with "cooked tongues" are greatly admired, respected, or even adored. (Dowoeh cites an instance of a lead *Gbòlò* drummer being asked to go and fetch salt from another village. The





Example 4.7. Fragment of *Gbòlò* music (transcribed by W. I. C. Dowoeh)

women in the group could hardly believe that a person of the drummer's stature could be entrusted with such a mundane task.)

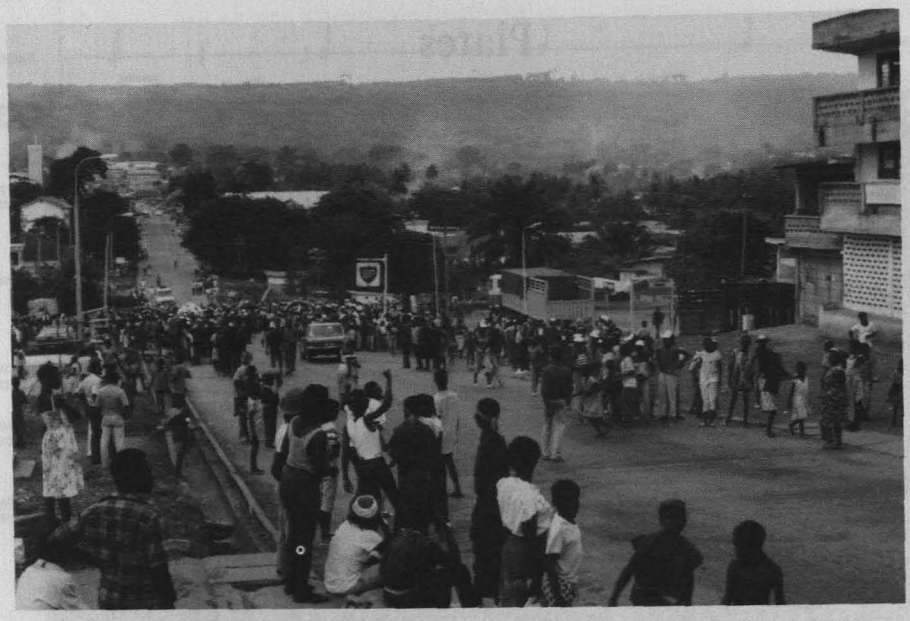
Rhythmic procedure in *Gbòlò*

Example 4.7 presents Dowoeh's transcription of the beginning of a *Gbòlò* performance in full texture.[15] It will serve to focus our concluding discussion of

Plates

1 Zìaví Zígí group, Zìaví, 1986

2 Zìaví Zígí group in performance, Zìaví, 1986



3 *Teɖuɖ̌ú* (yam festival), Ho, 1986

4 *Gligbàzã̀* (wall-breaking festival), Ho, 1986

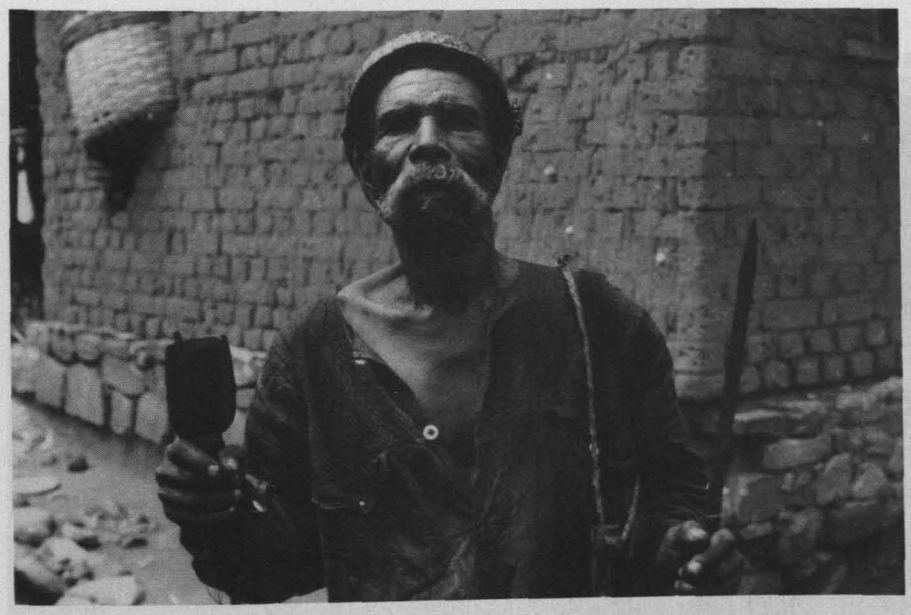
5 Àvènúi Àsàfò (warrior) group, Àvènúi, 1986

6 Placing *Àḍàbàtràm* (sacred drum) on carrier's head, Zìaví, 1986

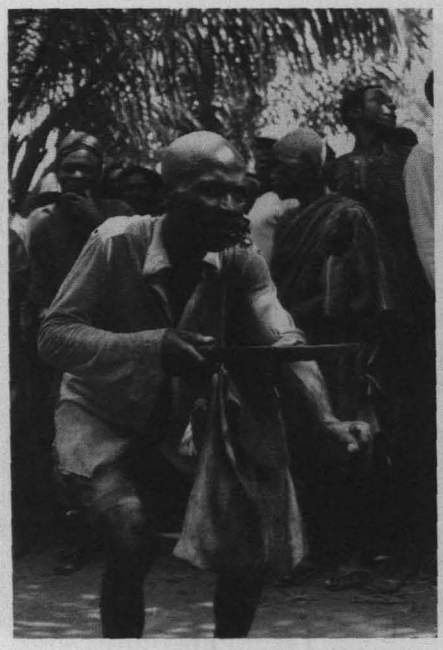
7 *Àḍàbàtràm* procession, Zìaví, 1986

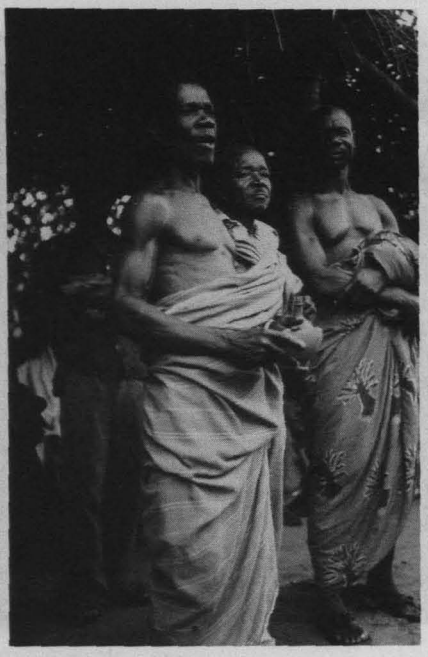
8 Church of the Living God, Akpafu-Mempeasem, 1986

9 Mátse Àsàfò (warrior) group, Mátse, 1986



10 Àdjèí Kɔmi, singer from Mátse, 1986

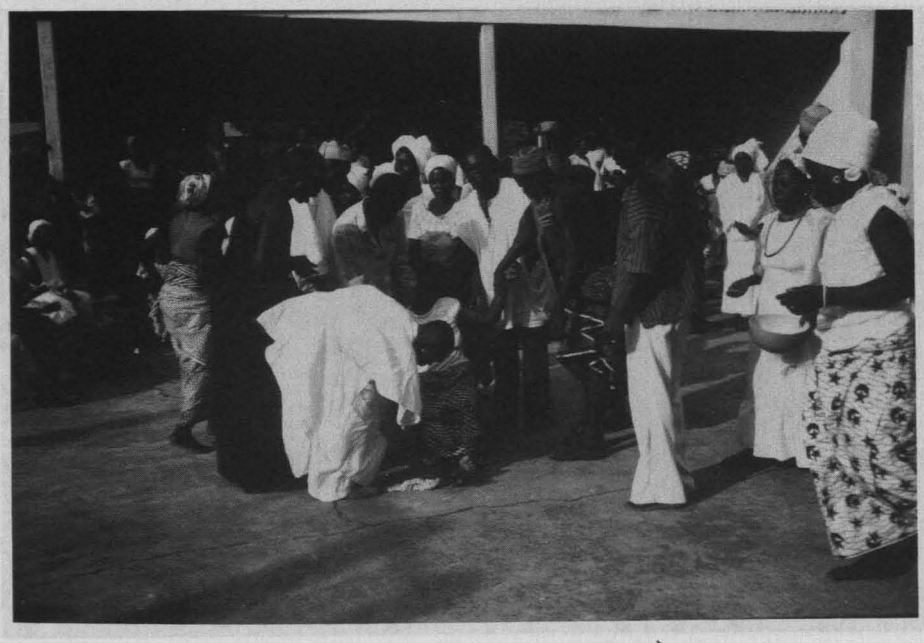




11 Executioner from Mátse dancing to *Tú*, a sacred dance, 1986

12 Pouring libation, Mátse, 1986

13 Performing *Òḍúm*, dance of bravery, Klefe, 1986



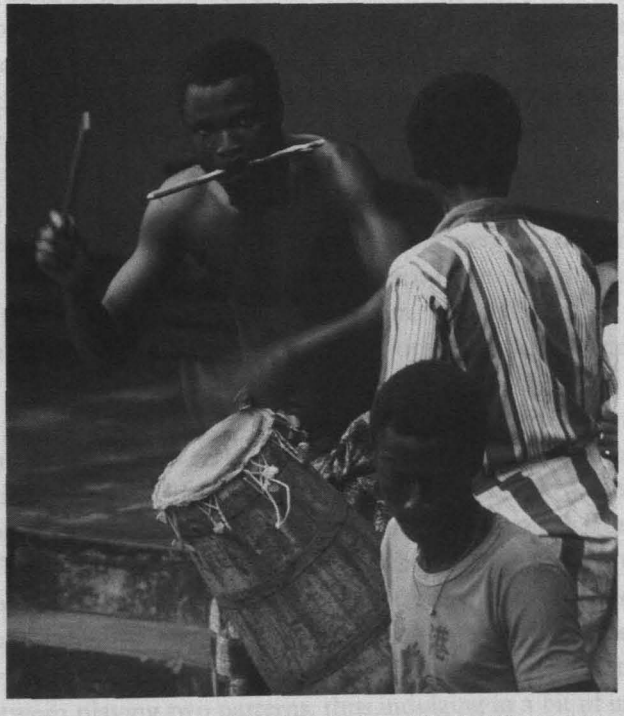
14 Woman in trance at *Dzòvú* performance, Pekí-Àvètíle, 1986

15 Tsamé Tòtòémè group in performance, Pekí-Tsame, 1986

16 Returning from farm, Akpafu-Mempeasem, 1986

17 Market, Ho-Bankoe, 1986

18 Primary school children, Akpafu-Todzi, 1986



19 Lead drummer of YMCA Cultural Group, Ho, 1986

the purely musical rhythms cultivated by the Northern Ewe. The performing ensemble is made up of eight distinct layers. These are (reading from top to bottom) rattle (*akayɛ*), castanet (*akoge*), double-pronged bell (*gakogui*), lead singer, chorus, small drum (*ʊ̀uvi*), big drum (*ʊ̀ùgā́*), and hourglass drum (*ɖòndɔ́*). These may be grouped according to musical function into three sub-groups. The first is the fixed-pattern sub-group, which consists of instruments that play an unchanging pattern throughout: rattle, castanet, and bell. (The apparently anomalous case of the small drum is considered below.) The second is the vocal sub-group, which consists of lead singer and chorus, and the third is the variable-pattern sub-group, which includes the small and big drums and the hourglass drum. The threefold division of the ensemble is undermined only by the small drum which, although it belongs timbrally to the more active variable-pattern sub-group, plays an unchanging pattern. There is one difference, however: the small drum plays *against* the metronomic sense established by the fixed-pattern sub-group. In other words, unlike castanet and bell, whose patterns articulate basic, referential patterns, the small drum's pattern challenges, and ultimately reinforces, those patterns.

Consider now the first sub-group. A typical performance begins with castanet setting the pace of the dance. The crotchet rest on the last beat of bar 2 ensures that the beginning of each two-bar pattern is unambiguously marked. In contrast to the castanet, the rattles define not a rhythm but a pulse comparable to the ticking of a clock or metronome. One reason why performances do not begin with the rattles – which, after all, provide a temporal reference point for other instruments – is that, unlike castanet, they are played by more than one person: by all the women in the group. It would be difficult to have thirty or so rattles begin cold in the same tempo. Furthermore, the density of rattle sound fluctuates in the course of the performance. As each woman enters the dancing space, she deposits her rattle on the side line or at the foot of the big drum as a sign of reverence. After dancing, she returns to reclaim her rattle. So, as women take turns to dance, one hears moments of lesser or greater reinforcement of the basic pulse.

The bell's pattern is the most intricate of those in the fixed-pattern sub-group. This is because, in addition to its consistent use of off-beat phrasing, its two prongs, existing at two distinct "tonal" levels, carry an agogic accentual pattern, whereby a progression from high to low connotes movement from tension to resolution. This makes all the more interesting bell patterns which terminate on the higher tone (bars 9, 13, and 20). Moreover, the phrases formed by the bell pattern unfold asymmetrically: A (bars 2–5), B (bars 6–9), B (bars 10–13), A (bars 14–17), and B (bars 18–21). What in effect happens is that the bell alternates between playing two patterns, thus indulging in a bit of improvisation not normally associated with the bell.

Sub-group 2, the choral group, articulates a rhythm that resembles the castanet pattern, except that it now exists on a macro rather than micro level. The complementary dyads D/F (bars 11 and 19) and C/E (bar 15) create a two-part, "question-answer" pattern reminiscent of the bell pattern but presented in four-bar groups. And, as often happens in this repertoire, the closing, "cadential" accents of the choral response (bars 11 and 15) coincide not with the corresponding close of the castanet pattern, but with its beginning. Part of the on-going sense of movement in *Gbòlò* derives from this lack of temporal coincidence between constituent cadences. Note, further, that in spite of the undeniable voice-leading relationship between the two dyads, neither necessarily predominates in the song's "modal" system: ending on either dyad is conceivable, which further confers an open quality on the music.

Meter in *Gbòlò*, as in other transcriptions of African music, essentially indicates grouping, and does not carry an *a priori* stress pattern. Stress is produced by a complex of procedures: endings of choral phrases, beginnings of rhythmic patterns, long notes, and so on. The combined effect of these procedures is to undermine audible meter and elevate phenomenal accents to a position of prominence. Once this relationship between meter and phenomenal accents is understood, we as listeners can hear in *Gbòlò* a light and fluid rhythmic texture, unfolding within a secure metronomic framework, but marking out its periods asymmetrically and sometimes unpredictably. There is, then, an overriding tension between the "background" repetition and regularity of African instrumental music and the kaleidoscopic changes of rhythmic/metric weight that characterize its immediate or "surface" structure.

The third sub-group exposes the most intricate individual rhythmic patterns in the ensemble. Although the small drum, as we noted earlier, plays a single off-beat pattern throughout (one is reminded of the Kídí part in the *Àtsìagbèkò* ensemble), both the large drum and the hourglass drum vary their patterns, some of which are improvised. Here, as in the bell part, the existence of two tones, with possibilities for further "tonal" discrimination, adds to the accentual possibilities of the drum parts. Like the hourglass drum's patterns, those of the big drum are typically syncopated, busier but slightly less varied. Both drums help to maintain the overall dynamic temperature of the ensemble by, as it were, turning the "dial" up or down as seems appropriate. "Turning the dial up" may involve introducing new, more intricate patterns, shifting the alignment of a familiar pattern, or increasing the density of rhythmic events. In this way, big drum and hourglass drum overlap in function; indeed, the joint presence of two "lead" drums in a single ensemble represents something of a departure from the norm.

The hourglass drum is a noticeably "foreign" instrument in this ensemble. Among the Yoruba, where it is thought to originate, and in some of the

instrumental ensembles of the Dagbon of Northern Ghana, where several *ɖòndɔ́n* may be used side by side, it serves preeminently as a "talking drum."[16] It is tempting to look for echoes of speech in its part in this ensemble, and then to advance the argument that this pure and "abstract" instrumental music is still word-dependent, and therefore meaningful in linguistic terms. It is true that the syncopated patterns in bars 9, 13, and 17 of the vocal parts, for example, share an obvious feature with the patterns in the hourglass drum part. But we cannot speak of a "generative" relationship between sung and drummed phrases. So, while speech rhythms seem to permeate the entire *Gbòlò* texture, their origins in specific lexical items is fortuitous and unintended. And since there are presumably no gaps in the pure, internal logic of the music, we are forced to conclude that all rhythms are being used for their intrinsic musical value and not because they seek to convey lexical meaning.

The rhythms of Northern Ewe drumming encompass a range of patterns from the word-dominated rhythms of speech to "pure" musical rhythms. In semiotic terms, we must distinguish between iconic and symbolic forms of signification. This broader view should help to undermine the claim, made most forcefully by Hornbostel in 1928 and widely circulated in informal talk about African music, that African rhythm is "ultimately founded on drumming."[17] We need not deny the important role that drumming plays in the articulation of an African rhythmic sensibility in order to point out that drumming is only one of several active forms of rhythmic expression among the Northern Ewe. To earlier constructions of Africans as drummers, we must now add three equally important constructions: Africans as orators, Africans as singers, and Africans as dancers.

5

Rhythms of musical performance

The rhythms of speech, song, dance, and drumming are brought to life in specific performances. Northern Ewe society, as we have noted, is thoroughly permeated by performative acts. Performance focuses a seemingly infinite variety of interactions, negotiations, productions, and exchanges. It is this polyvalent nature of performance that makes theorization difficult. Despite its communal, inviting nature, performance in African society does not necessarily support claims that no limits are placed upon acceptable modes of behavior during performance, that there is only a thin line between spectators and performers, that everyone is musical, or that everyone participates in musical activities. On the contrary, apparent spontaneity in communal behavior is invariably mediated by norms that are taught not in the form of abstract codes of social behavior but in the form of punishment for their transgression. It is therefore not only possible but desirable to frame an analysis within specific constraints, no matter how few, that are operative during an actual performance, bearing in mind that a good model of performance analysis is neither one that explains what happened nor one that predicts what will happen, but one that establishes the conditions of possibility for certain actions, and in so doing maintains a balance between the intended and the fortuitous, the planned and the emergent.

Nketia has written about performance in ways that are particularly relevant to the Northern Ewe traditions, so we might take a few moments to consider one pertinent idea of his. Writing about what he calls the "intensity factor" in the performance of African music, Nketia stresses the need to study "ways of presenting music as an event that provides an integrated aural, kinesic, and visual experience that stimulates particular modes of response and interaction." And in spelling out the constituents of these dimensions, he offers a long, but by no means exhaustive, list:

> a performance-tradition is distinguished in terms of the style of its music, instrumentation or choral organization, as well as its performance practice,

> modes of behaviour, dance styles and dance formations, distinctive costume, make-up, masks, and objects related to the occasion of performance.[1]

Each of these distinguishing categories could easily be subdivided and expanded upon. Costumes, for example, take different forms, and enshrine a variety of symbolic codes, of which color (the hunter's brown, the mourner's black, the new mother's white, and the peace-maker's green) is never unimportant. Dance styles and dance formations are likewise varied – by speed of gesture, by the part of the body on which movement is focused, and so on. And within the norms of dancing, room should be made for individual interpretation.

To acknowledge that the music event is polyvalent is to imply that analysis, too, must be polyvalent – multidimensional rather than one-dimensional. That is one reason why Nketia's integrative approach has a self-evident appeal. The challenge of theorizing performance, however, lies less in isolating "dimensions" than in establishing a syntax of the entire network of dimensions. How, for example, does the tempo at which the dance is beaten vary with the color of a dancer's costume? Does song structure reflect, or in turn affect, the make-up worn by performers? What is the relationship between dance style and the patterns played by, say, the bell? Assuming that these questions about two-way relationships yield viable answers, we would go on to explore three-, four-, and other-way relationships until we have exhausted all the theoretical possibilities. The challenge is considerable, and is not one that has yet been met by theorists of African performance. In the meantime, there is no end to calls for broader perspectives and integrative approaches. If, however, there is no demonstrable connection between the color of a dancer's costume and the tempo at which she dances, what sense is there in insisting that the two dimensions be included in every description or analysis of the music event? Could it be that such calls harbor a subconscious resistance to theory, a resistance to the perfectly justified method of selecting one or two syntactically governed dimensions for detailed scrutiny without at the same time denying the existence of several others? If the integrative approach remains on the level of producing lists – however long – of conditions concurrent with the music event, it is more likely to hinder rather than to promote our understanding of African performance practice.[2]

There are, of course, ways of talking about performance other than in the theoretical terms being described here, and some may feel that what we need is not an explanatory model at all but a well-constructed verbal description that enables us to imagine a particular performance. My own approach is something of a compromise between these two extremes. Since the performance that will form the focus of our discussion can be heard on the accompanying recording (it is by the Zìaví Zígí group and was recorded in 1986), it makes little sense to attempt to convey that experience in words. Of course, a certain amount of

description is unavoidable, but I will also attempt to indicate some of the structural foundations of the performance.

One central claim of the following analysis is that the energy, dynamism, and drive of this performance derive principally from a convergence of rhythmic processes in several competing, as well as complementary, temporal dimensions and at different structural levels. The Zìaví Zígí group's performance is unparalleled in its rhythmic vigor: the micro-rhythms of song are enunciated with considerable vitality and precision, drummers support and sometimes compete with dancers and singers, while "inner" and "outer" audiences (about which more later) maintain a high level of spontaneous response to what is being played, said, and sung. These local-level rhythms map into larger periodicities, producing the dances whose succession constitutes the performance. And, in hierarchic fashion, the succession of dances in turn maps out its own global periodicity. Although there is not necessarily a teleological process at work here, goals are set for each dance, for each group of songs, and for each section of a dance. We may speak of local trajectories, which, in turn, and perhaps more by default than by design, produce a global trajectory that is essentially rhythmic and accentual.

A feature of the Zìaví Zígí performance that facilitates analysis, and in particular offers glimpses into Northern Ewe aesthetics, is the "enclosed" nature of the performance: performers double as spectators, reacting in shouts, ululations, and slogans to their own singing, drumming, and dancing. For the "outer" audience, this self-referential mode conveys an impression of a complete, self-contained, indeed self-satisfied world. The event develops the profile of a play within a play, a celebration of playing as such. Playing is, of course, related to acting and performing, and these, as we have seen, are among the vital signs of life among the Northern Ewe.[3]

The group, the event

On 12 September 1986, I recorded a thirty-five-minute performance by the Zìaví Zígí group (CD tracks 27–31), an amateur performing group based in Zìaví, a village located some three miles to the north of Ho. "Zígí" is the name of a Northern Ewe recreational dance performed in places like Pekí, Hohoe, Kpándɔ̌, Zìaví, and Ho. Thought to have originated in Nɔ̀tsie, the last major pre-colonial Ewe settlement, *Zígí* is a dance for young people on the verge of marriage and for already-married men and women. It is scored for two drums, two castanets, other percussion instruments, and rattles. According to Akorli and Dake,

> members put on rich quality kente or cloths and beads to depict their wealth. Lazy people cannot join the group. The women plait their hair with white thread, as they could not get the black one [during the time of King

> Agorkoli, on whom see Amenumey, *The Ewe*], and smear frankincense to add to their beauty and also to attract men for marriage. The members of Zígí do not shake hands with the right[;] rather they use the left, for they have special respect for the Akaye they use. . . [Zigi] is played during Yam festivals, out-dooring of chiefs, [and] at funerals.[4]

The performance on the morning of 12 September 1986 took place on the premises of the local middle school, in a grove of nim trees, cultivated to ensure adequate shade for the playground. The gods decided to bless us with rain during the event, requiring us to move indoors midway through. (If you listen to the recording, you will notice that the acoustic environment changes with the performance of *Àdèʊ́ú*. Also, extra percussive and rhythmic effects are created by the sometimes large drops of water that fell irregularly onto the microphone. Such are the bonuses of fieldwork.)

The Zìaví Zígí group consists of thirty people, made up of twenty girls, eight boys, and two men. (From here on, I use the ethnographic present of 1986. Readers should realize that there have been changes in the composition of the group, their repertoire, and their performance style. Subsequent visits in 1989 and 1992 brought these changes to light. Since, however, the aim here is to analyze a specific performance, I will stick to the events of 12 September 1986 and, unless absolutely necessary, suppress information about the group's subsequent development.) The group was formed in 1975 by Mr. E. N. K. Akorli, who composes, arranges, and teaches the "traditional" songs and dances. Mr. W. K. Dake, a teacher at the middle school, is co-leader of the group. Mr. Akorli's thirteen-year-old daughter, Mawuse Akorli, serves as lead singer and lead dancer. Other members of the group are mostly pupils of the middle school, which puts them in the 11–16 age category. The group is known throughout the Ho area, and has performed elsewhere in Ghana. In 1985, they took part in the Fifty-Year Jubilee of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, and were adjudged the best National Juvenile Troupe. Subsequently, they participated in INDUTECH '86 and '88, and in the National Intertourism of 1986. They were invited to Elmina in 1987 to take part in the filming of *Cobra Verde*, a German film.

Performing space and performing resources

The Zìaví Zígí group performs outdoors, usually in a wide open space. Where possible, a performance (such as the one analyzed here) will take place under a group of trees so that some protection from the hot sun can be obtained. While the outdoor, unbounded space is the setting for "traditional" musical performances, the group also performs in a modern setting: the bounded, closed space of a studio or stage. In a fundamental sense, then, built into their act is a mechanism for moving between tradition and modernity, between the village arena and the

concert stage. An understanding of the constraints on performing space should therefore enhance understanding of the nature of movement patterns deployed during the performance itself.

Two overlapping spaces are used for an outdoor performance. The first, the "outer space," is delineated by the spectators, who often stand in a closed or nearly closed circle around the performers. Within this outer space is embedded a U-shaped "inner space," which consecrates the group's main performing space. Girls of the ensemble form the two parallel lines of the U-formation, while boys and men arrange themselves to form the connecting third line. Drummers sit directly in front of the boys and men. For purely ceremonial reasons, this particular performance included a designated and appropriately clad "chief" and "queen mother," who sat on stools just left of the instrumentalists, and rested their feet on goat skin.

How are these spaces utilized? The spectators may move freely within the outer space, as long as they do not get too close to the performers. Although it is in this sense conceptually fixed, the outer space in reality expands or contracts to mirror the flow of spectators during the performance. Performers, by contrast, while based in the inner space, may occasionally move outwards into the outer space. The open end of the U-shape creates an ambiguity in the limits of inner and outer spaces which performers exploit by dancing across the nominal barrier. The inner space is used by the dancers (mostly the girls), who move into and out of this "center" during each dance. This means that the two parallel files of the U-shape are constituted differently at different moments of the dance. Outer and inner spaces, although distinct, are exploited in analogous ways.

The pattern of space ownership just described arises in specific response to the problematics of performance in post-colonial society. It is a cliché of performance criticism that in a traditional African setting, there is no distinction between audience and performers. While this commonplace observation may have been useful in orienting us to the role of a participating rather than a non-participating audience, and while it may have provided a basis for contrasting African practice not with "Western" practice but with a specific corner of Western practice (i.e. the ostensibly "quiet" audience of classical music concerts), it tends to exaggerate the nature of this difference. At no Northern Ewe performances is it impossible to tell the difference between performers and audience, even when the latter sometimes behave like the former. True, some performances are designed as "free-for-all" affairs, but these are negligible in number when measured against performances that are planned around a core of competent musicians who maintain a certain degree of autonomy from the audience. It is time to resist the unanimist urge to construct "musical societies" all across Africa. What needs stressing is the ordinariness of audience participation and its qualitative and quantitative variability: a mere nod of the head, a recurrent stomping of the

foot, a periodic clapping of hands, and an occasional entry into the dance ring. Surely one need not travel all the way to Africa to find such behavior.

I venture the hypothesis that the outer space belongs to tradition whereas the inner space belongs to modernity. By clearly marking both spaces, the Zìaví Zígí group achieves an effective compromise. By allowing a free flow from one space into the next, they underscore the fact that tradition contains modernity, or that modernity is invariably built upon or against a traditional foundation. The fact that Northern Ewe society is full of such compromises suggests that the pre/post-colonial encounter is only one of its more spectacular manifestations.

The constitution and physical disposition of performing resources suggest certain conflicts of hierarchy within the performing ensemble. The idea that ensembles in general, and drum ensembles in particular, "reflect" societal structure, including that of a nuclear family, has found favorable reception in writing about this repertoire. Metaphorical roles of "kid brother," "father," "heart beat," or "peasant class" are easily assigned to individual instruments or groups of instruments. The fragile nature of these metaphors becomes clear as soon as the musical patterns played by the instruments are assessed for function from an explicit music-theoretical point of view. What is likely to be more productive, then, is not the idea of a fixed hierarchy but rather that of a shifting one. At a given moment in the temporal process of a performance, some form of hierarchy is exhibited, but the determinants of that particular formation may be replaced the next moment by different ones. Temporal shifts bring structural (hierarchical) shifts.

With this less simple view of hierarchy, we can acknowledge conflicts across a number of apparently fixed hierarchies in the construction of the Zìaví Zígí ensemble. No doubt polarities are suggestive of hierarchic organization, for the Zìaví Zígí group includes those who play instruments and those who do not, those who dance and those who do not, a "chief" and "queen mother" and their subjects, and other such hierarchic oppositions. Undermining these neat divisions are a number of alternative constructions, of which three may be mentioned briefly. First, the normative division between boys as instrumentalists and girls as dancers is undermined by the fact that each girl plays a rattle (*akayɛ*), a gourd filled with beads producing a dry, brittle sort of sound. As we saw in the discussion of *Gbòlò* in the previous chapter, the *akayɛ* functions as a marker of pulse. It yields no rhythmic patterns except whatever the listening mind imposes on this particular sequence of recurring beats. The *akayɛ*, however, takes its place alongside the castanets played by boys. These instruments often articulate specific rhythmic patterns, not just pulses; they constitute, in other words, the time line, not the density referent. While the pulse given by the *akayɛ* is indispensable, it is absorbed and further shaped by the castanet patterns, rendering it dispensable. The disruption to the neat polarity – boys carry the instrumental

burden, girls do not – results from the fact that, although both boys and girls play instruments, the on-going work of guiding the dancers, supporting the singers, and playing with rhythms is performed by the boys.

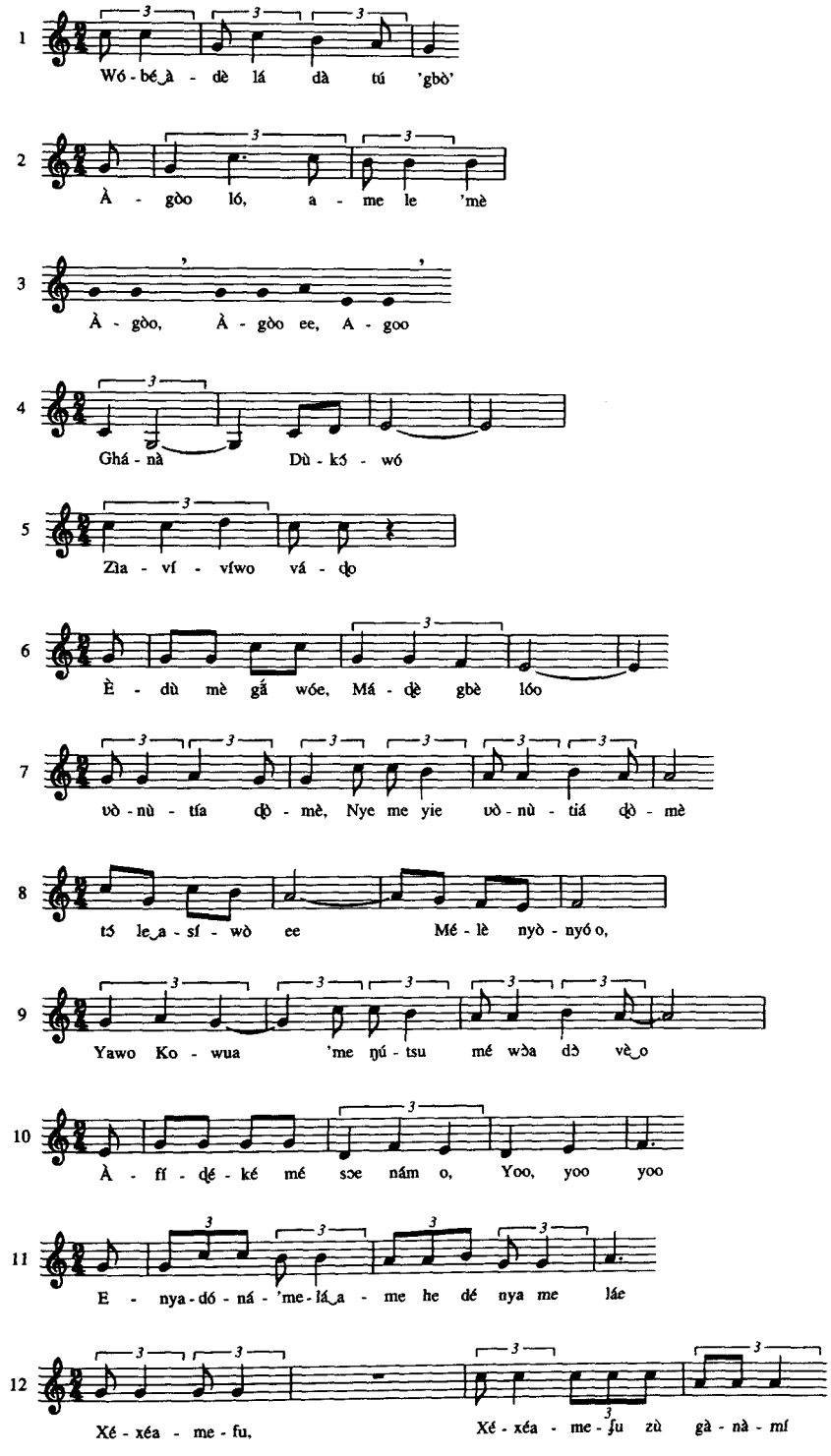
Second, although everyone in the group sings, not everyone is meant to be a singer. The singing is led by a singer, Mawuse Akorli, who "calls" the songs, directs their performance, and decides at what rate songs should be exchanged. She also often leads, or at least initiates the dancing, and is rarely absent from the inner space for very long. In this compound role, she emerges as the leader, the one who shapes the profile of the performance. From time to time, however, she and Mr. Dake share the spotlight. Apart from ensuring that the chorus always responds to Mawuse, he occasionally takes up the Call parts of the song if he feels that the group needs energizing or if he particularly likes the song (the dance *Àdèʊ́* seemed to be his favorite on this occasion). The result is an occasional "double soloist" singing a set of heterophonic lines.

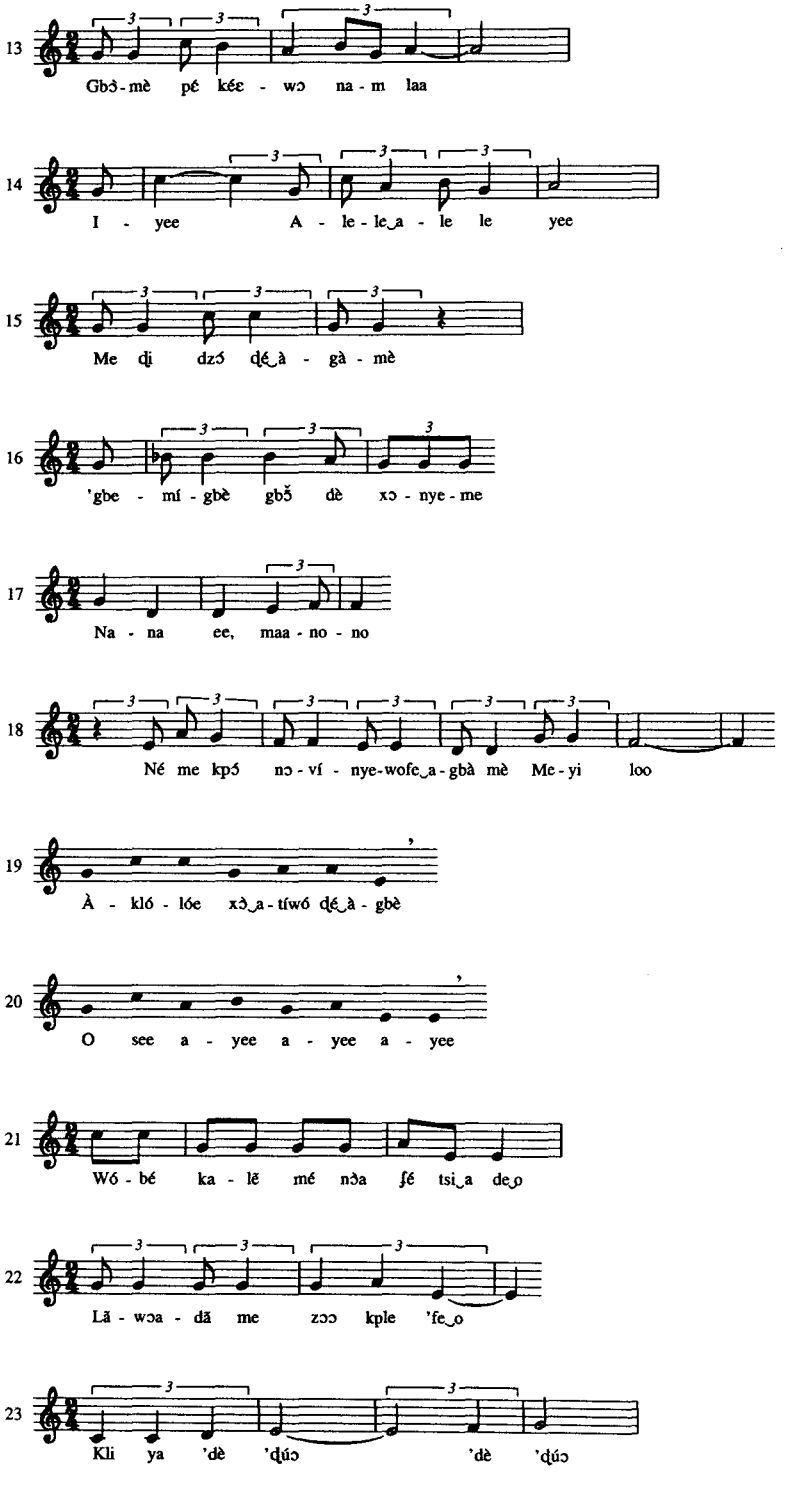
A third manifestation of hierarchy is in the role played by the ceremonial chief and queen mother. They, after all, "oversee" the performance. As befits their role, they lend a dignified but quiet presence to the performance. Occasionally, however, they get up to dance, and these are special moments, moments of great poignancy. Although they symbolize traditional political authority, their hierarchic status is pathetically benign, since it is the people with hands-on tasks who actually "oversee" the performance. The result is tension between a symbolic hierarchy and a real one.

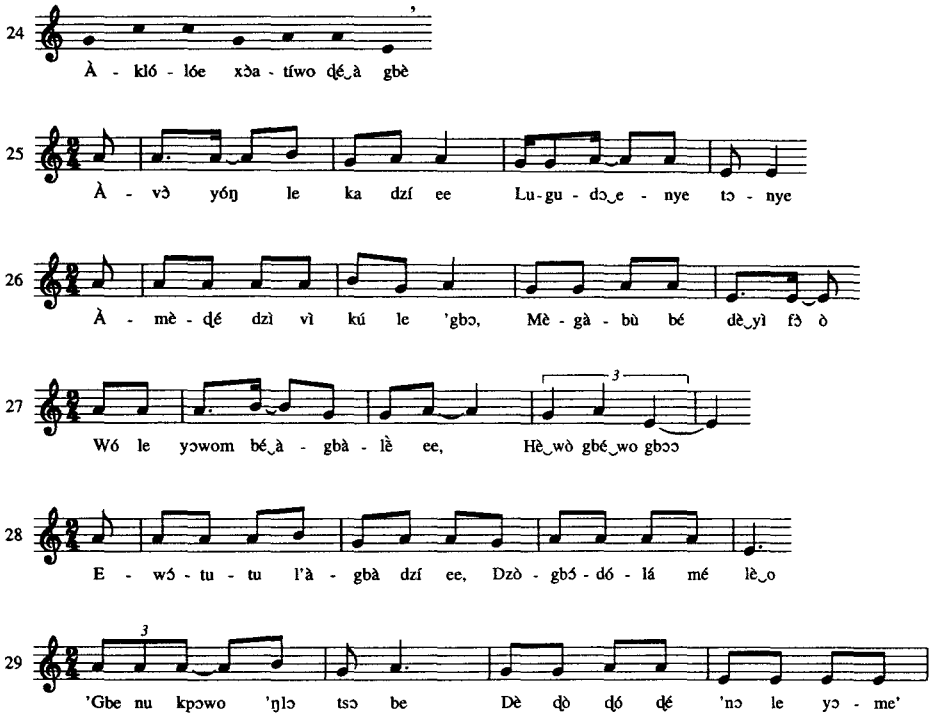
The performance: macro-structure and global rhythm

The Zìaví Zígí group dances, sings, drums, plays bells and rattles, shouts, and talks. Each member of the group is therefore proficient in more than one activity. There is no doubt, however, that although a performance is multidimensional, its heart lies in the singing. Readers will gain some sense of the magnificence of the sheer sound of Northern Ewe singing from the recording. Ewe speakers will further find it difficult to resist being drawn into the intimate world constructed by the performers from what they say in and out of song. We cannot, however, reduce the meaning of the entire performance to a single formulation. The performance subtends a rich web of signs which provides the conditions of possibility for the construction of meaning. What are these signs, and what sorts of meanings do they give rise to?

Example 5.1 gives incipits of all the twenty-nine songs heard in the course of the performance followed by their words in Ewe and English translation. The performance begins at CD track 27 with the Introduction (Songs 1–3). Then come *Zígí* 1 (Songs 4–10) at track 28, *Zígí* 2 (Songs 11–18) at 29, *Àdèʊ́* (Songs 19–23) at 30, and *Gbòlò* (Songs 24–29) at 31.


1
Wó - bé_à - dè lá dà tú 'gbò'
2
À - gòo ló, a - me le 'mè
3
À - gòo, À - gòo ee, A - goo
4
Ghá - nà Dù - kɔ́ - wó
5
Zìa - ví - víwo vá - ɖo
6
È - dù mè gǎ wóe, Má - ɖè gbè lóo
7
vɔ̀ - nù - tía ɖɔ̀ - mè, Nye me yie vɔ̀ - nù - tiá ɖɔ̀ - mè
8
tɔ́ le_a - sí - wò ee Mé - lè nyò - nyó o,
9
Yawo Ko - wua 'me ŋú - tsu mé wɔa dɔ̀ vè_o
10
À - fí - ɖé - ké mé sɔe nám o, Yoo, yoo yoo
11
E - nya - dó - ná - 'me - lá_a - me he dé nya me láe
12
Xé - xéa - me - fu, Xé - xéa - me - ʃu zù gà - nà - mí


13
Gbɔ̀-mè pé kéɛ - wɔ na - m laa
14
I - yee A - le - le a - le le yee
15
Me ɖi dzɔ́ ɖé à - gà - mè
16
'gbe - mí - gbè gbǒ dè xɔ - nye - me
17
Na - na ee, maa - no - no
18
Né me kpɔ́ nɔ - ví - nye-wofe a - gbà mè Me - yi loo
19
À - klɔ́ - lóe xɔ̀ a - tíwó ɖé à - gbè
20
O see a - yee a - yee a - yee
21
Wó - bé ka - lĕ mé nɔa ʃé tsi a de o
22
Lă - wɔa - dă me zɔɔ kple 'fe o
23
Kli ya 'dè 'ɖúɔ 'dè 'ɖúɔ



Example 5.1. Incipits of all twenty-nine songs sung during the performance

Introduction (Songs 1–3, CD track 27)

1

Wóbé àdèlá dà tú "gbò"	They say that the hunter shot *gbo*
Wóbé àdèlá dà tú gbò	They say that the hunter shot *gbo*
Wóbé àdèɛ métsí tèɟé ò	They say that the animal did not stay in place

2

Àgòo ló! Ame le émè	Agoo! There is someone inside
Fiagã́wó, dùmègã́wó	Chiefs, elders of the village
Àgòo ló! Ame le émè	Agoo! There is someone inside
Zìaví asàfò ee	Zìaví warriors
Àgòo ló! Ame le émè	Agoo! There is someone inside
Yɔ́ wóe dùmèvíwóe	Them, people of the village
Àgòo ló! Ame le émè	Agoo! There is someone inside
Yewó tɔ́, dùɔ tɔ́wo	Theirs, owners of the village
Àgòo ló! Ame le émè	Agoo! There is someone inside

3

Àgòo, àgòo ee, àgòo!	Agoo, agoo ee, agoo!
Míatame miánɔ kesié	Our heads we will be peaceful

Vɔvlɔ̃wó fétéfété	All the spirits
Tɔgbétɔgbéawó	All you ancestors
Miékla mi lóò	We have sought your permission
Kùsìe, kùsìe	Peace, peace
Àgbàyí lóo, ayee	Agbayi, ayee
Míeyɔ́mì lóò	We have called upon you
Kùsìe, kùsìe	Peace, peace

Zígí 1 (Songs 4–10, CD track 28)

4

Ghánà dùkɔ́wó	People of Ghana
Mìwɔ̀ dèká kplé nyatefé	Unite under the banner of truth
Amehá, "mehá vòvòvòwó	A host of different peoples
Wówɔ̀ takpékpé	Held a meeting
Wódà àsí dé édzí	They put their hands on the fact that
Ghánà dùkɔ́	The nation of Ghana
Éya énye Afrika dèlá	Will be Africa's savior
Nyagblɔdí lá névá émè	May the prophet's words come true
Yee, yee, Ghánàvíwó	Yee, yee, children of Ghana
Mìwɔ̀ dèká!	Unite!
P.N.D.C.	P.N.D.C.
Provisional National Defence Council	Provisional National Defence Council.

5

Zìavívíwó váḍó	Zìaví children have arrived
Né ekpɔ́wó tsé anyá loo	As soon as you see them you will know
Prampramvíwó váḍó	Prampram children have arrived
Zígívíwó váḍó	Zígí children have arrived

6

Dùmègãwó, máḍè gbè lóò	Elders of the town, allow me to speak
Dùɔ̀tɔ́, máklá gbe mádì lóò	Owners of the town, I take leave of you

7

ʊ̀ɔ̀nùtíaḍòmè	Under the judgment tree
Nyè meyie ʊ̀ɔ̀nùtíaḍòmè ò	I am not going under the judgment tree
Funyetɔ́wó ta	Because of my enemies
Né meyi tɔnye mâdzɔ̀ ò	If I go I won't be found innocent

8

Tɔ́ lè àsíwò	You have a father
Mélènyònyó ò	It is not going well

Nɔ́ lè àsíwò	You have a mother
Mélènyònyó ò	It is not going well
Wòavá zù bé	What if it becomes that
Ɖèké déké mélè àsíwò ò	You have nothing at all?

9

Yawo Kowua,	Yawo Kowua
ame ŋútsu méwɔ̀a dò èvè ò	A human male does not work two jobs
Ɖè àsí lè fi ŋú	Leave stealing alone
Nàlé dɔwɔwɔ̌ me	And hold on to working
Mele núɔ wɔ	I am doing the thing
"zɔ́ pé mèlè àtsia ɖú ɖé ŋú gbé	I am now going to dance decorations to it

10

Àfíɖéké mésɔe nám o, yoo	No place sweets me, yoo
Àbé *Zígí* víwó ƒé xɔ̀mè ò	Like the home of *Zígí* people

Zígí 2 (Songs 11–18, CD track 29)

11

Nyatónámelá	The person who gossips
Amehedényameláe	Puts people in trouble
Wòtóe nám ɖé	Since s/he told it to me
Dè màagbé ɖè nú à?	Will I refuse to pass it on?

12

Xéxéame fu	The world's sufferings
Xéxéame fu zu gànàmí	The world's sufferings have become like the faeces of a hyena
'yá mèfà	Which have touched my body

13

Gbɔ̀ mè pée kié wɔ nam lâ?	Has the town treated me like this?
Ètɔ́ gɔ́me tsé wɔ nám lé yaa	My father's realm too has left me empty
Ènɔ̀ gɔ́me tsé wɔ nám lé yaa	My mother's realm too has left me empty

14

Yee, alele	Yee! bush rat
Mezu aléle háwo ee	I have joined the ranks of bush rats
Éfi mekú ɖá ee,	I have died in this very place
Mezu aléle háwo ee	I have joined the ranks of bush rats

15

Meɖi dzɔ́ ɖé àgàmè	I ripened and fell into a ditch
Ðe wómé sèe ò à?	Have they not heard it?
'gàtó mumɔ̃e ee	Lemon on the edge of the cliff

16

Égbemigbe, gbɔ̃ de xɔnye me	That day goats went into my room
Àtsúsi ʋanú ɖè àtí le xɔnye me	The jealous co-wife unlocked my door
Àhànòxɔ́lɔ̃ édè àtí le xɔnye me	The drinking partner unlocked my door
Eví malɔ̃ nú ɖè àtí le xɔnye me	The favorite child unlocked my door

17

Naná, ee, maa nónó	Mother, I want to feed
Dɔ̀ lè wùnyĕ ee, manónó	I am hungry, I want to feed

18

Né mekpɔ́ nɔvinyewó f'ágbàmè	When I see my neighbors' load
Meyi lóò	I go
Mèyì àfé lo,	I head for home
Mèyì àfé	I am going home
Midɔ́ àgbè!	Sleep with life!

Àdèʋú (Songs 19–23, CD track 30)

19

Àklólóe xɔ̀ àtíwó d'ágbè	The creeping plant received the trees to life
Àtíaɖéké méxɔ̀ àklólóe ɖé àgbè ò	No tree received the creeping plant to life

20

Osee yee! Osee yee!

21

Wóbé kalẽ ménɔ̀a 'fé tsia de	They say a brave one does not hunt at home
Dzadza bele bele bele	The wet dew

22

Lãwɔ̀adã̀ mezɔɔ̀ kple fe o	A wild animal does not expose its claws
Fèlè àkúme	The claws are hidden

23

Kliya àdè wòɖúɔ̀	The brave one dances the hunter's dance

Gbòlò (Songs 24–29, CD track 31)

24

[Same as 19]

25

Àvɔ̀wó yɔ́ŋ le ka dzí	There are many cloths on the line
Lugudɔ́ényé tɔnye	Mine is the greybaft

26

Ameɖé dzì vì kú le 'gbɔ́	Somebody had a child and died from it
Mègàbùbé ɖè yì fɔ ò	Do not think that you have found it

27

Wólè yɔ́ wom bé àgbàlɛ̃ lo	They are calling you skin
Hèwògbé wó gbɔ̀ɔ	You are going to be stretched

28

Ewɔ́ tutu lè àgbà dzí	There is ground flour on the shelf
Dzògbɔ́dólá mélè ò	The maker of the porridge is not there

29

Égbe núkpɔ́wó ɔlɔ 'tsɔ bé	Today's riches have made you forget yesterday
Ðè ɖò ɖóɖé nɔwo le yɔ me	Send cloth to your mother in the grave.

Example 5.2, an outline of the structure of the performance, interprets the overall structure as a five-unit form. In Unit 1 (Songs 1–3), the group is introduced to its audience, prayers are offered, and contact among performers is established. This introduction qualifies as a metaphorical "upbeat" or anacrusis in the global rhythm of the performance. Unit 2 (Songs 4–10) consists of a first rendition of *Zígí*, the recreational dance that inspired the name of the group and that constitutes one of its specialities. Here, one experiences a definite sense of a prolonged downbeat, a sense of arrival after the lesser continuity of Unit 1. A second variety of *Zígí* follows as Unit 3 (Songs 11–18), which enhances and even surpasses the dynamic level of Unit 2. Then comes a performance of *Àdèʋú*, the hunters' dance, adapted to this purely recreational context. Relatively brief, Unit 4 (Songs 19–23) does not quite match the intensity levels reached in Units 2 and 3. Finally, another recreational dance, *Gbòlò*, is beaten to close the performance (Unit 5, Songs 24–29). Both its sustained dynamic and its terminal position conspire to create the strongest sense of arrival in the whole performance. We may postulate a global rhythm in which the Introduction, *Zígí* 1 and *Zígí* 2 exhibit increasing levels of dynamic strength, a structural crescendo; *Àdèʋú* functions as "prelude" to *Gbòlò*, which is both end point and high point of the performance. In musical metaphor, the global rhythm may be represented as shown in the last line of Example 5.2.

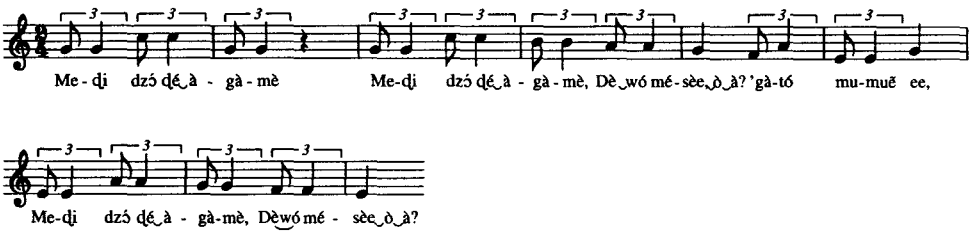
Performance Units :	1	2	3	4	5
Dance Types :	Introduction	Zígí 1	Zígí 2	Àdèvú	Gbòlò
Songs :	1-3	4-10	11-18	19-23	24-29
Duration :	6' 13"	6' 02"	6' 00"	5' 26"	6' 49"
Structural Rhythm :					
(in durational metaphor) :	2/16	8/16	4/16	3/16	8/16

Example 5.2. Overall structure of the performance

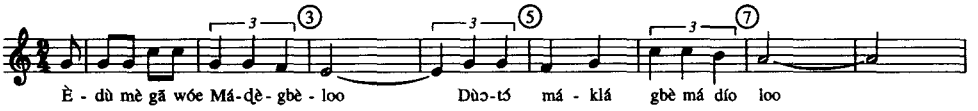
This rhythm is, of course, nothing more than a crude metaphor for the rather more complex dynamic profile of the performance. But it has the advantage of highlighting an on-going global process within which more intricate local processes function. Consider as an example of the latter the question of beginnings and endings. In this "studio-type" performance, there is a contracted beginning and ending. The ending, however, is not necessarily executed by careful and prolonged closure. This is because, while the procedures of beginning are carefully planned, those of ending are left to take care of themselves, so to speak. Dance sequences stop; they do not conclude. Perhaps this is another sign of compromise between "traditional" and "modern" performing practices. Traditionally, beginnings are flexibly conceived (participating spectators trickle in as they hear the drums) while endings are even more flexibly conceived (the dancing continues as long as the musicians are willing to continue playing). This asymmetry in the traditional protocol is retained and at the same time modified in the modern protocol: a thirty-five-minute program must begin on time with very explicit moves, but as long as there are songs to be exchanged and repeated, there is no need for the ending to be comparably structured.

Generative principles of musical organization

Two basic principles of musical organization are essential to an understanding of the Zìaví Zígí group's performance. One has to do with rhythm, the other



Example 5.3. Short–long rhythmic pattern



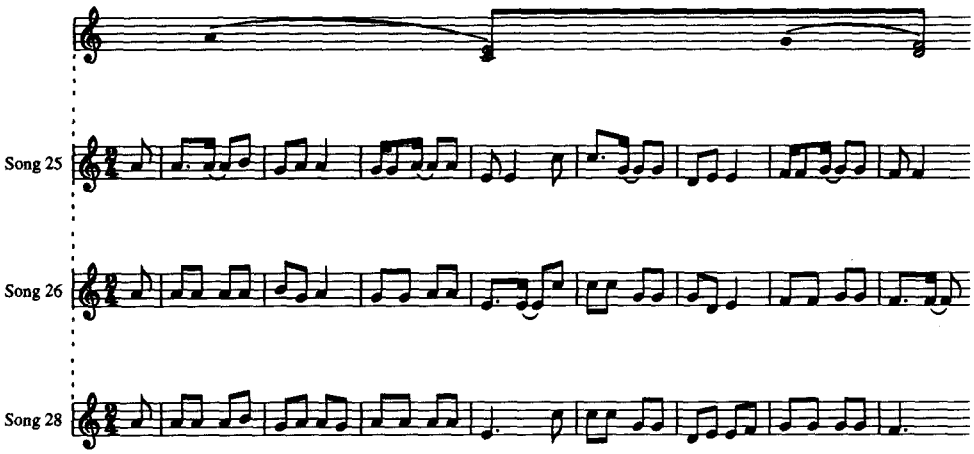
Example 5.4. Cross-rhythmic pattern

with pitch. The fact that the principles are not restricted to this particular set of songs does not lessen their pertinence to this discussion.

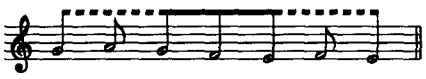
The principal generative rhythm of Northern Ewe song is a short–long or quaver–crotchet pattern, already familiar from previous chapters. Its mobility stems from the fact that the shorter note is frequently placed on the stronger part of the beat while the longer note occurs in weaker position. Used in succession, the pattern can generate a great deal of energy: it "trips" and "skips" in potentially unending flight.[5] Song 15 is a good example of the use of this rhythmic cell (see Example 5.3). Out of a possible seventeen crotchet beats, the pattern occupies thirteen, the remaining four consisting of one crotchet rest (bar 2) and three crotchet terminal notes (bars 5, 6, and 9). Although freedom in execution may encourage doubts about the precise 1:2 proportion, there is no question about the short–long sequence.

The short–long pattern works in conjunction with two other characteristic rhythms. First is the retrograde of the short–long pattern, a long–short or crotchet–quaver pattern, which also occurs with very high frequency in this repertoire. Second and more important is a "linear cross-rhythm," a successive occurrence of 3:2 or 2:3 proportions in the melodic domain. As Example 5.4 illustrates, triplet groupings in bars 2, 4, and 6 contrast with duple groupings.

A second generative principle is pitch-based. In general, Northern Ewe songs can be understood as elaborations of simpler models or archetypes. At least two such models are used in this performance. Model 1, shown in Example 5.5, comprises a pair of step-related dyads that frequently frame the Response portions of a song. The *Gbòlò* unit (songs 24–29) provides a clear illustration of this model, and the three realizations of this model are taken from this unit of the performance. Model 2, shown in Example 5.6, is a descending shape, a background "song" that is brought to life in different Northern Ewe foregrounds. Three different realizations, each divided into six segments, each segment aligned



Example 5.5. Structural model 1 with three different realizations



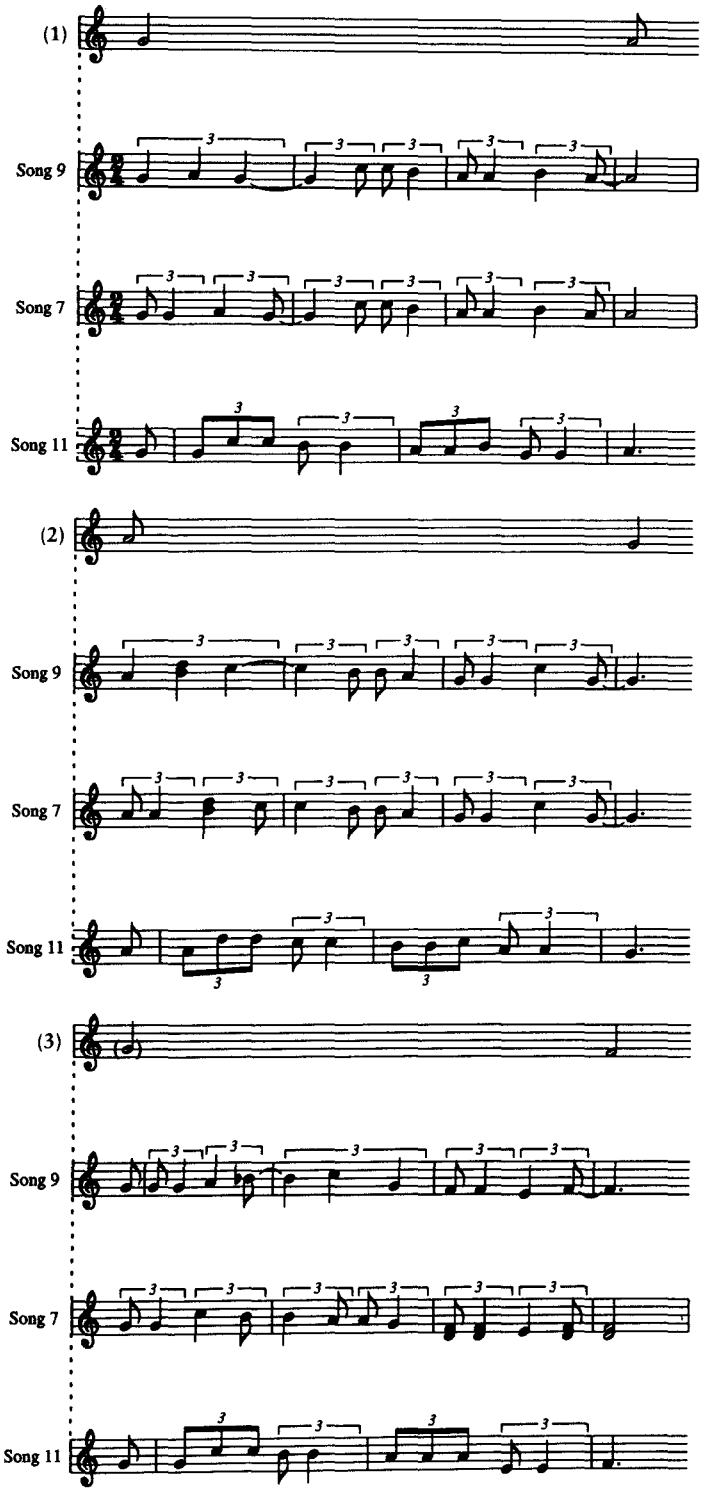
Example 5.6. Structural model 2

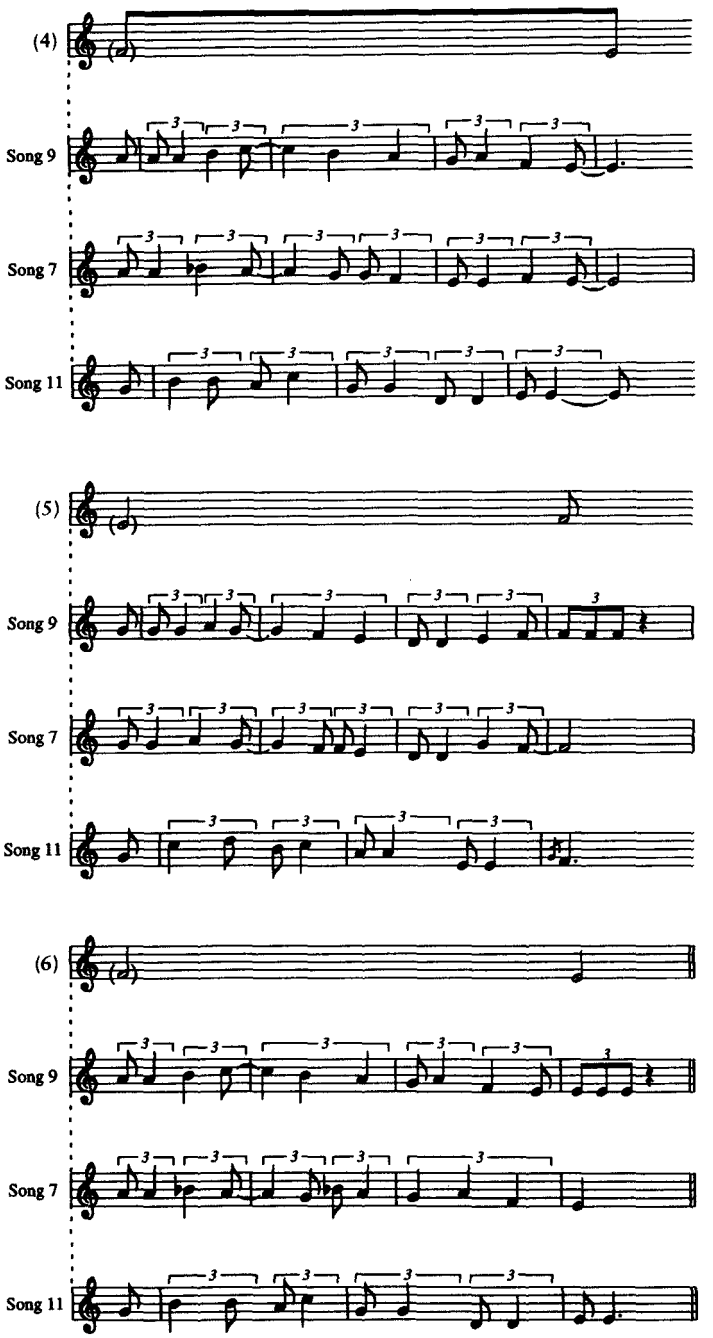
with the abstract model (top line), are shown in Example 5.7. The model consists of an initial structural pitch, elaborated by an upper neighbor-note, followed by stepwise descent to the terminal pitch, which is also elaborated by neighbor-note motion. The usefulness of thinking in terms of models derives, not from evidence that Northern Ewe singer-composers actually say that they think this way – although few composers in an oral tradition can do without some sort of inscription or representation on their memories of essential compositional habits and routines – but from the ability of the models to reveal underlying structural connections among songs. Such underlying connections are of particular value in countering claims that melodic structure is rigidly constrained by speech tone.[6]

These two generative principles (and their numerous derivatives) interact in various ways to produce the specific songs sung in this performance. In an effort to convey something of the real-time unfolding of this performance, emphasis is not placed on the principles as such (they are referred to wherever pertinent); rather, using song texts as a convenient guide, I shall comment on a few of the salient meaning-producing signs in the performance.

Unit 1: Introduction (Songs 1–3, CD track 27)

The performance begins with a procession into the actual performing space, accompanied by singing, drumming, and a modest swaying from side to side. The first sounds are those of the lead singer's *akayɛ*, which set the pace for the first song. She sings three phrases, equivalent to the Call of the song, after


(1)
Song 9
Song 7
Song 11
(2)
Song 9
Song 7
Song 11
(3)
Song 9
Song 7
Song 11



Example 5.7. Three different realizations of structural model 2 (Example 5.6), divided into six segments

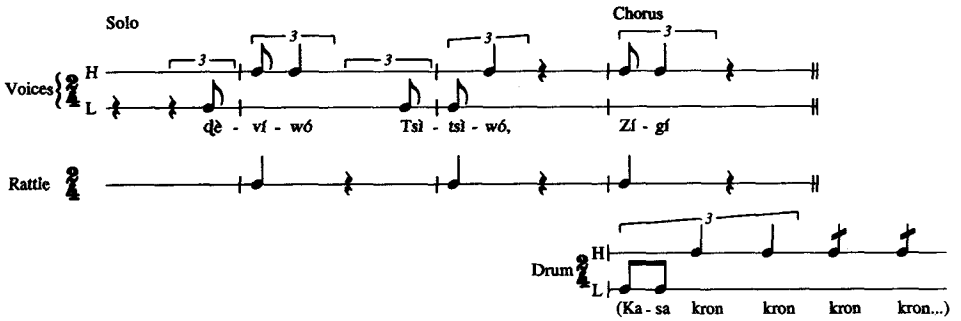
which the chorus responds with another two phrases. Generated by a short–long pattern, the Call is set syllabically, thus giving it a busy sense. It reaches forward in the sixth bar by means of a hemiola pattern to the high point of the phrase. The chorus "receives" the high pitch and leads the line down gradually. Relatively longer note values and fewer short–long patterns give the Response a more relaxed and "resolutory" feel.

Inscribed within its proverbial and enigmatic text is the message of this processional song: "They say that the hunter shot *gbo*, they say that the animal did not stay in place." "They say" is a wonderfully liberating phrase, a call to creativity, an invitation to recall, revise, or even fabricate history. It defines an unbounded "temporal space," the common property of all of us who belong to the community. We all know that the hunter's shot is meant to leave the animal dead in its tracks, but this was not the experience of the song composer. Enigmatic expressions of this sort are, of course, common among Northern Ewe songs. The purpose here is to provide listeners (including performers) with a philosophical idea to reflect on. In place of a direct, propositional statement about something plain and verifiable, we are offered a probing enigma. At the very least, then, the occasion of recreational performance is a "serious" affair. There will be many more "deep thoughts" for contemplation in the rest of the performance. This, then, is emphatically not mere entertainment complete with enough athleticism to amuse spectators. It is also an occasion on which the more thoughtful of us will renew our continuing engagement with some of life's basic and most difficult questions.

At the end of Song 1, a drummed phrase says "speak truly" ("kàsà krón krón.") The language is Twi, not Ewe, and the phrase provides the first instance in this performance of the use of drums as speech surrogates. In general, drum patterns are used to inspire singers and dancers by delivering certain set appellations by which the Zígí group is known. The most common of them is "Zìaví Pràmpràm" (LHLL), which will be heard frequently. To underline the close of Song 1, girls shake their rattles, producing an effect very much like a long percussion trill.

Having posed the enigma, the Zígí group sings two further introductory songs, both concessions to the "proper" way of speaking in public. We know from studies of African address systems that anyone daring to speak in public must follow a certain rhetorical code, whose basic requirement is that organizational hierarchy in societal and cosmological structure must never go unacknowledged. The Zìaví Zígí group meets this obligation in Song 2 by asking permission from the paramount chief, elders of the Zìaví village, members of the Zìaví *àsàfò* or warrior groups, people of the village, and "owners" of the village.

Song 2 is in Call–Response form; successive calls enable the lead singer to list the various people from whom permission is sought. The recurring choral



Example 5.8. Emergence of meter at the end of spoken announcement

phrase allows singers to "knock on the door" while at the same time answering it. Performers, in other words, act as their own audience, developing a mode of self-reliance that contributes to the energy of the performance. Like Song 1, this one begins with an *akayɛ* pulse followed by a solo Call and the choral Response. In addition to illustrating the short–long pattern and linear cross-rhythms, this song further exemplifies the function of a pitch progression as the basis of structure: dyads F/D and E/C form a direct, goal-oriented progression that holds the Response together. There is also a hint at the phenomenon of a "double soloist" as Mr. Dake (the school teacher and co-leader in charge of this particular performance) and one or two singers occasionally extend their lines into the solo region, producing a more complex harmonic profile in the Call sections of the song.

Like Song 1, Song 2 ends with a drummed "kàsà krón krón." Then comes the official announcement by the lead singer, first in English and then in Ewe: the group has come to entertain us. The idea of an announcement is inconceivable outside the context of a studio adaptation of the group's act. The notion of a "Zígí, danced in the olden days," continues to offer opportunities for dipping into a history, real or imagined, in order to establish a continuity with the present. If Songs 1 and 2 belonged to tradition, the verbal announcement implies a concession to modern practice. Surely the content of the announcement is redundant. Style alone is enough to attract and hold the interest of the participants. Notable is the way in which the announcer's final words, "Ɖèvíwó, tsìtsìwó, Zígí" ("Children, adults, Zígí") are spoken not in speech rhythm as before but within palpable metrical constraints (Example 5.8). Then, for the third time, the drums comment with their "kàsà krón krón" phrase.

The third song in this introductory section, which may be regarded as a complement to Song 2, is a prayer, a plea for blessing from departed ancestors. While Song 2 seeks permission to speak in public, Song 3 invokes the ancestral spirits without whose guidance things may not go well. Since this performance is to involve dancing, and since dancing can sometimes lead to altered states of consciousness, it is important that nothing be done irreverently, and that the

departed ancestors understand that they are in it with us. Hence this further ritual which, for those anxious to be entertained, seems only to delay things further. But for those who take such ritual obligations seriously, there can be nothing perfunctory about this moment of prayer.

Song 3 is sung entirely in speech rhythm, without metrical structure. Pauses are determined by breath groups of verbal phrases. The lead singer first sings the entire prayer, after which the chorus repeats it. During the choral singing, drums beat out the entire panorama of the Zìaví Zígí group's appellations, while rattles contribute a rapid, unpatterned beat to the overall texture. A pervasive unanimity is thus established as point of reference. Song 3 is a good example of multilevel communication in Northern Ewe performance: sung words open up the syntactic, phonological, and especially semantic dimensions of language; the use of drums as speech surrogates opens up a further communicative dimension; and the "trilling" of rattles adds pure sonority to the moment.

Song 3 brings to an end the preliminary events of this performance. "Listening back" to the performance so far, we discern a migration in the group's collective "voice." Whereas the utterance of Song 1 was directed at everyone present (including the performers themselves), that of Songs 2 and 3 targets specific individuals or groups. By the end of Song 3, all relevant "forces" have been activated. It remains to "get down."

Unit 2 : *Zígí* 1 (Songs 4–10, CD track 28)

Unit 1, the introduction, is the most rhythmically varied and discontinuous section of the performance. This is understandable in the light of the various rituals that must precede the drumming and dancing proper. The rest of the performance, however, follows a set pattern. With each dance, the musical texture is first established. Then a series of songs is "exchanged" for as long as the dance lasts. Dancers move into and out of the inner space, shouting slogans, admiring and encouraging one another, and, in general, celebrating this as an occasion of song and dance. Dance steps and movements are mostly gentle and graceful (with the exception of *Àdèʋú*), oriented towar ds the earth, and built upon alternating footsteps and circular movement. The sense of an urgent telos is abandoned as the performers settle down to *enjoy* the various dances.

Zígí 1 is initiated by a neo-traditional anthem, Song 4. Since these are relatively young voices, the full impact of an S.A.T.B. choral arrangement is not felt here. (For the latter, one needs to listen to groups like the Celestial Joy Singers of Kpándŏ [CD track 24]or Dumedefo of Ho.) Song 4 urges the people of Ghana to rise to the challenge of leadership in Africa. It is possible that these words go back to the period of Ghana's First Republic, when, thanks to the leadership and influence of Kwame Nkrumah, a pan-Africanist ideal was inculcated in many

young people. Although the words are not particularly profound, their message is unambiguous. At the very end of Song 4, reference is made to the P.N.D.C., the ruling body in Ghana during 1986. Listeners react differently to this undisguised mention of the Rawlings regime. Some say that the reference is opportunistic, a way of influencing future politically motivated performance assignments. Others see in it a not unusual conjunction of art and politics. If, as the Northern Ewe know well, art and religion are inextricably linked, then why not art and politics?

Song 4, too, uses the Call–Response principle. First, the lead singer sings the whole song through. Then a fully harmonized version of the song is sung by the entire chorus. Another solo version is begun, during the singing of which the rest of the chorus comes alive with various slogans, appellations, and self-congratulatory remarks. The chorus takes over, leading to the spoken "P.N.D.C." Finally a series of drummed appellations concludes the song.

Given its unabashed use of European functional harmony, this neo-traditional anthem is likely to be readily understood, not only by "Westerners" but also by members of other Ghanaian ethnic groups. In the same way that English is the official language of Ghana, serving to unite a country with a wide diversity of ethnic allegiances, so Western functional harmony, in its manifestation in hymns, popular song and anthems, functions as an interethnic musical language. Might this be a hint to policy makers, or is it an ironic comment on the communicative resources of post-colonial Africa?

Beginning with Song 5, the *modus operandi* is as described above: a series of songs unfolds over a continuous instrumental texture. Rather than discuss the structure of individual songs, I will focus on the texts of songs, the thought being that they constitute a key dimension of performance that needs to be "translated" for my readers.

That there is no necessary order to Songs 5–10 is clear from the sequence of subjects. First comes an assertion that the "Zìaví children" and the "Prampram children" have arrived (Song 5), then another request for permission from the elders and owners of the village to speak (Song 6), then a funeral dirge (Song 7), then a song celebrating parenthood (Song 8), then a song of insult (Song 9), and finally a song celebrating the sweetness of the home of the *Zígí* people (Song 10). In other performances by the group, many more songs may be exchanged, but their actual sequence remains flexible.

Of particular significance to the rhythmic structure of song 5 is the alternation between duple and triplet patterns or linear cross-rhythms. Triplets occur with each mention of "Zìavívíwó" and "Prampramvíwó," thus setting them apart from all the other words in the song. In a sense, the triplet group has greater mobility than the duple; it moves towards a goal, creating the sense of tension leading to resolution. This appears to be the case at the start of Song 5, where

the rhythmic processes are underlined by a pitch process, too. Song 6 also makes extensive use of the 3/2 alternation, achieving a nice, lilting forward movement.

The inclusion of a funeral dirge (song 7) in this purely recreational context underscores the point that the gap between sacred and secular, or between serious and popular/recreational, may sometimes be small or non-existent. The dirge, versions of which are sung in Ho, Pekí, Hohoe, and elsewhere, is presented here at a very fast pace – faster than I have heard it sung at any funeral. According to the text, a moral majority, anxious to judge me, is lying in wait for me; therefore I will not go to the shade of the judgment tree. Framing issues in terms of adverserial forces is a very common textual device in Northern Ewe oral poetry. It arises from the obvious fact that Northern Ewe regularly face death, disease, poverty, and misfortune. Encoded in their songs, therefore, is the recurring theme of trying to subdue physical and spiritual forces in order to live.

Also of interest in Zígí 1 is a song of insult (Song 9), which had been preempted at the end of Song 7. Song 9 names a thief, Yawo Kowua, and reminds him that a man does not work two jobs; he should quit stealing and start working. Correcting anti-social behavior through song may not be the most efficient social policy, but it does have the desired effect of humiliating the victim. Other African societies have similar or analogous repertoires.

With Song 10, the Zígí group looks inward again and prepares for the end of this first sequence of songs. "No other place sweets me . . . like the home of the Zígí people" both celebrates the sheer joy in music-making and indirectly invites others to join in. Exploiting the duple–triple alternation of rhythms, the structure of the song most closely approximates a strophic model. Although strophic songs as such are not common in the Northern Ewe repertoire, the *strophic impulse* is everywhere in evidence. In Song 2, for example, the successive listing of people is conducted within the constraints of a single musical shape. Similarly, in Song 5, the substitution of "Prampramvíwó" for "Zìavívíwo" points to a realized paratactic musical process. The issue, then, is not whether the same tune can be sung to different words but how much of the same tune can be accommodated by different words. Song 10 shows that an eight-bar phrase can support such a process. Three sets of words are "set" to the same melody, with rhythmic adjustments made in order to accommodate varying syllable counts.

Throughout the performance of *Zígí* 1, and especially during Song 6, members of the ensemble shout various slogans to energize their fellow performers. The group thus creates the illusion of a complete performance, rendering the "outer" audience almost redundant. Among the slogans they shout are "The voice of the gourd!" and "Beat the inside of the voice!" Several intensifiers are used, perhaps the most memorable of which is the threefold "iyee, iyee, iywhee."

Although the recording conveys only part of the atmosphere of the performance, the listener will gauge the high tenor of the occasion not only from the

singing but also from the numerous spoken asides; indeed, to call them "asides" is to falsify their essential function. It is impossible to overemphasize the importance attached to words in this performance. One who does not understand them misses a basic dimension of discourse, a dimension that is well-nigh indispensable to a proper discussion of meaning. Above all, Unit 2 makes clear that these young men and women perform first and foremost *for themselves*. And the thought seems to be that if such an inward-looking strategy can inspire them to flights of excellence and dynamism, then the non-participating audience may benefit as well.

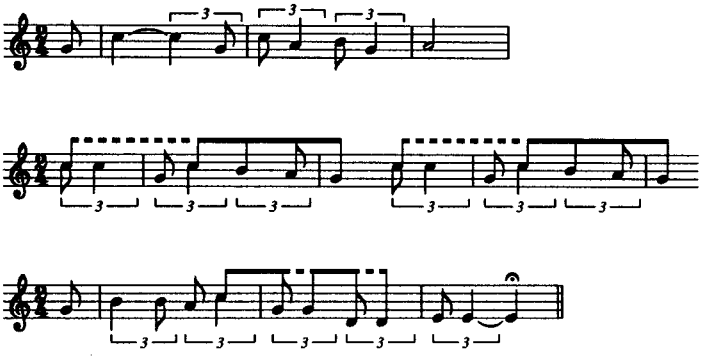
Unit 3 : *Zígí* 2 (Songs 11–18, CD track 29)

The intensity level attained at the end of *Zígí* 1 is immediately regained at the start of *Zígí* 2 and carried further. As pointed out earlier, *Zígí* 2 leads to a high point and a definite moment of closure, carrying the process of philosophical reflection on texts one stage further. As with *Zígí* 1, the instrumental ensemble is first assembled; songs are then exchanged while dancing gives profile to the music.

Song 11 neatly exemplifies the pitch-generative principle of a background descending line. This is a song about people who gossip: those who gossip about others are bad people. With a Heine-like reversal, however, the poet reveals in the last line that she herself will not hesitate to pass gossip on. Of special significance to the melodic structure is the two-fold occurrence of the interval of a descending fourth. Descending fourths, here as elsewhere, often produce a special expressive effect. This is partly because they stand out in the otherwise predominantly stepwise character of Northern Ewe melodies. The perfect fourth may function as the inaugural interval of a song (Example 5.9a), as the limit of a linear unfolding (a "fourth span" in Schenkerian terms) (Example 5.9b), or perhaps most poignantly, as a characteristic progression in the approach to cadences (Example 5.9c).

Song 12 likens the world's sufferings to the faeces of a hyena. Unfortunately for the singer, she has stepped in this pile of shit and cannot get rid of the smell. The hyena's faeces are metonymic with the world's sufferings. And of course Northern Ewe singers, many of whom have known tragedy in their lives (if not in actuality, then at least imaginatively), readily identify with the song's sentiment.

Particularly striking in this song, although it is over in a split second, is the shouted phrase, "Bàbàa ló!" which Northern Ewe use to express sympathy. (Although it is sometimes rendered into English as "sorry," the word *bàbàa* is essentially untranslatable. It expresses sympathy for a misfortune for which the speaker is not necessarily responsible.) On hearing the singer say "the world's sufferings," an alert respondent, sensing what might be coming, immediately



Example 5.9. Three different dispositions of perfect fourth interval

chimes in "Bàbàa ló!" It is the quickness and spontaneity of the response that give credibility to this particular intervention. As in the performance of folktales, such interpolating is encouraged in order to give the performance as a whole a high degree of realism.

Song 14 marks an important turning-point in the performance of *Zígí* 2. It is a rousing refrain that, as it were, brings the entire ensemble together. All along we have heard solo singing alternate with group singing. Since the soloist usually sings first, one might demote the significance of the group Response by saying that it "merely" duplicates the solo song. In Song 14, however, the role of the chorus is expanded in two ways: first, the solo is shorter and is literally interrupted by the chorus, conveying, at least for the moment, its greater functionality; second, the chorus dwells on long syllables that enable the purely sonic dimension of the singing to be well communicated. The effect of the song, then, is of an arrival at a high point or plateau. One is reminded of the jubilant cry, "Osee yee!," widely used in Northern Ewe performances for similar rallying purposes. (In the performance of *Àḍàbàtràm* discussed in the previous chapter, for example, a rousing "Osee yee" appears periodically after extensive repetition of some threatening verbal phrase or other.)

Songs 15 and 16 continue to develop themes of isolation, personal humiliation, and loss. Enlivened by the generative short-long rhythm, song 15 uses the image of a lemon tree situated on the edge of an abyss, one of whose fruits falls into the abyss. The singer impersonates the fruit: have people not heard that I, a ripe fruit, have fallen into the abyss? This message, too, is about lacking helpers at a crucial time of need. In Song 16, a woman laments the day she returned home to find that goats had entered her room because someone had intentionally removed the "stick" or lock from the door. She wonders who might have done this and suspects the following: a jealous co-wife; a drinking partner; and a favorite child. While lamenting this humiliation, she also indirectly warns others that co-wives, children, and drinking partners can easily betray you.

Song 18 functions as a closing signal for *Zígí* 2. It is a fixed referent, used for this particular purpose whenever the group performs. The text is a take-off on another practice familiar to anyone who has grown up in a farming community. At day's end, workers head home, the men carrying tools in a knapsack, while women and children carry foodstuffs, vegetables, fruit, or firewood in large bowls balanced on their heads. It is this home-going image that is coded in song. "When I see my neighbor's load," says the singer, "I go, I head for home, I am going home, sleep with life." In like manner, the end of this song is a signal to "go home," not of course in the literal sense, but in the metaphorical one of closing one section of the performance.

Unit 4: *Àdèʋú* (Songs 19–23, CD track 30)

Àdèʋú is a hunter's dance. As indicated in Chapter 4, it is performed in two ways: first as a symbolic narrative of the hunt itself; and second, as a non-diachronic portrayal of aspects of hunting and associated brave deeds. The Zìaví Zígí group uses the second of these models, adapting it to their modest dancing style, a style almost antithetical to the spirit of *Àdèʋú*. Of course, every performance of *Àdèʋú* is a creative interpretation of it, so there is nothing unusual about what the Zìaví Zígí group does. We note only that restrictions of space do not encourage flamboyant demonstration of what it means to battle with the elements as you hunt for a wild animal.[7]

Song 20 is an "Osee yee," a traditional cheer. Like Song 3, it is sung in speech rhythm and harmonized almost entirely in thirds. Then follow three songs in strict rhythm, each one of them celebrating an aspect of bravery or success as a hunter. If you are brave, Song 21 suggests, you should go out into the bush and fight. After all, a brave person does not stay in the village to hunt. Musically, Song 21 alternates sections of relatively quick-paced, syllabic singing with longer resting notes. It also closes somewhat abruptly in the way that many *ávihawó* or "crying songs" close. Song 22 is a strophic variant of 21. Its text reveals a secret of wild animals: they do not normally expose their claws when they are walking. Finally, Song 23 celebrates valor: a brave person dances only the hunter's dance, not a "good" (i.e. smooth or wimpish) dance.

Earlier on, we referred to the phenomenon of a "double soloist." The performance of the *Àdèʋú* songs illustrates this. Not perhaps surprisingly, the performance of a "man's dance" inspired Mr. Dake to attempt to take over, or at least reinforce, the Call sections of the songs. This may be simply a matter of personal preference. Many Northern Ewe performance traditions make room for this kind of foregrounding, however. Since Mawuse does not abandon her role during Mr. Dake's incursions, we are treated to two enactments of the role of soloist, one planned, the other spontaneous.

After the energetic *Zígí* performances, and despite the potential of *Àdèʋ́ú* to outdo "mere" recreational dances, this performance of *Àdèʋ́ú* represented something of a lowering of dynamic. This may have been due, in part, to the very specific events of 12 September 1986, when, as a result of rain, we had to move indoors after *Zígí* 2. It may also be explained by the fact that the structure of *Àdèʋ́ú*, with its near-demotion of choral singing, does not enable a full demonstration of what the Zìaví Zígí group is best at.

Unit 5: *Gbòlò* (Songs 24–29, CD track 31)

If the beating of *Àdèʋ́ú* represented something of a lowering of tension, the performance of *Gbòlò* brings a heightening of the spirits. We may say that with *Gbòlò*, the ensemble returns to the structural dynamic of *Zígí* 2 and brings the performance to a fitting conclusion on a high note.

Unit 5 is made up of six *Gbòlò* songs, most of them repeated several times. To introduce the *Gbòlò* dance, a song in declamatory rhythm is first sung. The experience narrated is a familiar one: our favors are not always returned. The metaphor used here is that of *àklólóe*, a creeping plant, which grows to protect other plants, but itself remains unprotected. As always, words like these are designed to fit individual experiences; they are offered here in capsule form as a subject for philosophical exploration during the dance proper.

Songs 25–29 follow in strict rhythm, and each of them is an elaboration of the pitch model E/C progressing to F/D. Minor changes occur in response to word rhythms and to style, but the archetype is kept intact for these five songs. If there are lingering doubts about the view that in the Northern Ewe repertoire speech tones cannot be regarded as the ultimate determinants of musical structure, these five songs should settle the issue.

In *Gbòlò* texts, the tendency begun in the introductory section is carried over into the main dance. Each song encodes a timeless truth, often presented in binary form. Song 25 is an acknowledgment of isolated poverty. "Of all the cloths on the drying line, mine is greybaft." ("Greybaft" is cloth not designed to be worn but to be used for shipments of rice and flour from the United States to the Third World. It is an indication of some Northern Ewes' material situation that these empty sacks were strung together to make clothing. The contrast to textile prints from Holland or even from Juapong, Ghana, is quite significant.) The text is, in part, an acknowledgment of the singer's lowly position, in part a comment on the unfair distribution of resources, and in part an appeal for material assistance. Song 26 is a warning against facile discoveries and a celebration of motherhood. The fact that a mother has died does not mean that you have "found" the child left behind. The stigma attached to barren women, thematized in many African texts, is directly invoked here. Indeed, the tale analyzed in the next chapter deals in part with the burden of childlessness.

Song 27 relates the transitoriness of beauty. The text may be imagined as an exchange between two animals, one of which has a beautiful skin. They are calling you a piece of skin now, one animal says to the other, but you are one day going to be stretched. Other animals may admire and even envy the design of his skin, but he should not forget that one day he may end up underneath some human being's feet as a piece of stretched skin. Song 28 laments the death of a mother figure. That is why there can be flour on the kitchen shelf but no one to make the porridge. And finally Song 29 tells a woman who has suddenly come into wealth not to forget her dead mother. While your mother was alive, she worked hard to look after you. If you have now made money and own many cloths, the least you can do, instead of forgetting about times past, is to remove one of the cloths and send it to your mother in the grave. Short memories are here discouraged, especially when what seems to be forgotten is the very ecology that sustained one's upbringing and paved the way for future success.

The same sort of musical continuity that was a feature of *Zígí* 1 and *Zígí* 2 is evident in the *Gbòlò* performance. Once the instrumental texture has been activated, dancing begins and songs are exchanged. There is much repetition of songs, some of it designed merely to prolong the performance. The performance of *Gbòlò* stops when the lead singer and her entourage have had enough, or when the studios have to close.

"Listening back" over the performance as a whole, one can see, perhaps more clearly, the way in which the "global rhythm" assigned to the performance as a whole (see last line of Example 5.2, p. 126) was achieved. This trajectory is, we must emphasize, unique to this particular performance, although it shares with many others a fluctuation in levels of intensity and an ending on a high "note."

Performance, we have said again and again, is polyvalent, presenting a particular challenge to anyone wishing to convey its "essence." There cannot be a simple or facile summary of the "meaning" of this remarkable performance by the Zìaví Zígí group. What we have done is to highlight some of the factors that enable individual listeners to construct meanings from the network of actions and transactions. Two brief points might be made in conclusion. First, the performance creates a world unto itself; it opens up innumerable avenues for enjoying song, drumming, and movement. I should stress that there are no virtuosos in the group. Although the assigned role of a "lead singer," for example, implies a hierarchy of ability, the entire network of role playing is constrained by an acknowledged ordinariness – amateurism in the best African sense. The power of community, which we have seen expressed in a variety of ritual and artistic modes, is further illustrated in this performance. Second, it is remarkable that the Zìaví Zígí group in 1986 comprised young adults, barely older than children. Children's music, as we explained in Chapter 3, is not

different in kind from adult music; there is no conscious simplifying process at work whereby children are fed milder, less complicated, or less sophisticated forms of adult expression. On the contrary, children are fed the thing itself, hard and complete, making the artistic worlds of children and adults intertwined and inseparable.

6

Rhythms of folktale performance

Our discussion up to this point has been concerned with the elements of rhythm as manifest in various Northern Ewe expressive forms: language (Chapter 2), song (Chapter 3), and drumming and dancing (Chapter 4). The main emphasis has been on specific manifestations of rhythm, either in the form of recognizable *figurae*, or as "generative" elements of a more continuous texture. In Chapter 5, we moved from the "local" to the "global," from the elements of rhythm to the structuring influence of rhythm across larger temporal structures. Performance provides a good medium for investigating this phenomenon. Among the Northern Ewe, the dynamic of verbal, and especially musical, performances is invariably a product of various forms of rhythmic interplay. When, at the climax of a performance, for example, one person turns to a neighbor and declares "Èvùɔ sɔ́!" ("The dance/music/performance is really together!") or "Éde éme nám ló!" ("It has really gone inside for me!"), he or she is responding to the intensity factor, itself an outcome of play in the temporal realm. This chapter extends the discussion of performance to a popular and richly creative art form: *glitótó* or story-telling.

The folktale in synopsis

There once lived a woman and her husband. They had no children. When she got up from bed every morning, her sole wish was to have a child. One day, the man got up as usual and went to the farm. She was to follow later with the day's meal. On this day, her desire to have a child was so strong that she asked herself, "How can I keep cooking for this man, and still not bear a child?" She nevertheless prepared the meal and set off for the farm. No sooner had she reached the bush than she found a handsome little boy. The boy looked as if he had been waiting for her all his life. She, too, could

hardly believe her eyes. They embraced each other passionately. She said, "Ao, as for today, I too have given birth to a child." She said it again and again. Then she took the child to her husband's farm. When she got there, she shouted to him in a loud voice, "Husband, today I have given birth to a child." He was very excited when he heard this. He immediately stopped what he was doing and rushed to meet his new child. All three of them were so excited that they could not even settle down and eat the meal she had prepared. They decided not to work anymore that day. Picking up a few items of food and some firewood, they set off for the village. They wanted to go and show off their new child.

At the time that the child was found he was carrying a beautiful little flute. In the excitement and rush to get home, however, the boy forgot his flute on the farm. They were about halfway home when he remembered his flute. He told his parents that he had to go back and find it. They agreed, and said that he should go and come; they would wait for him. So the boy went back to the forest to search for the missing flute. He had been looking for some time when two wild animals entered his part of the forest. They had been hunting for meat for their evening meal. When they saw the boy, one animal said to the other, "Who is this boy who has so much meat on him?" So they quickly caught him and took him back to the land of animals.

A little cage was built for the boy, and three animals were put in charge of keeping an eye on him, just in case he tried to run away. Meanwhile the other animals went to look for sweet spices with which they would prepare the boy soup. As for the rat, he went to have his teeth sharpened; he knew he was going to be cracking bones at dinner time.

While in captivity, the boy was busy thinking of ways to escape. Then an idea occurred to him. He said to his guards, "Could I please have a little clove to chew in order to reduce the smell in my mouth?" They agreed. In fact they were amused by this request, for they knew that whatever he did, he was going to be eaten for dinner. They passed on an especially large bunch of cloves. The boy started chewing it. He was doing it very noisily, trying to distract the animals. They started wondering among themselves, "Is it only cloves he is chewing like that?" The noise continued. Finally they decided to take a look. This was the moment the boy had been waiting for. He took one good aim and spat the bitter, acidic juice from the cloves straight into the animals' eyes. The animals were temporarily blinded. He also peed and shat on them. Then he escaped.

Meanwhile the other animals had returned from gathering ingredients for the soup. They put a big pot of water on the fire. When the water was boiling vigorously, they called out to the three animal guards to bring the meat for boiling. The guards opened the door of the cage only to find that the

boy had escaped. When the other animals heard about the escape, they were not happy at all. They summoned the three guards to a hearing. "What happened?" each one of them was asked. The first "animal," the dove, speaking in animal language, said "Iremi tuu tuu tuu." He said it again and again. The second guard, the rat, said "He passed here, he ended up there." And the third, butterfly, said, "Nyè mè kpɔ́i o, o hee" ("I did not see him, oo hee").

To this day, these are the noises that the three animals make. They are still searching for the missing boy.

Before we begin the analysis, some preliminary remarks about the Northern Ewe folktale are in order. The folktale (known as *gli* in Ewe and *inatùkà* in Siwu) satisfies a natural tendency to "narrativize." When seen against the horizon of Northern Ewe performative acts and narrative modes, its significance becomes clear. The folktale is ideal for studying rhythmic expression because it is the site of no small number of interactions among a wide diversity of impulses. As Anyidoho puts it, the art of story-telling "seems to allow the creative imagination its widest, wildest range over the known and purely imaginable universe."[1] One set of impulses revolves around an ontological issue. Anyone reading a synopsis of the above tale will be forgiven for not being particularly captivated by the plot. Quite apart from the obvious fact that the folktale loses part of its life in transcription and translation, it is conceived, not necessarily as a plausible construction of an aspect of human experience – although it is exactly that sometimes – but as a performance, an exploration and exploitation of presentness. The folktale seems to be less about *what* is narrated (content, meaning) than about *how* that thing is narrated (style, form).[2] The distinction is fragile, of course, for it is hardly possible to imagine a thing narrated apart from how it is narrated. Still, a useful purpose will have been served if the distinction focuses attention on the performative act itself, and thus brings about greater awareness of the techniques of temporal /rhythmic structuring. It is not, therefore, merely that the above tale is "about" the origins of certain animal sounds and modes of behavior, but that, as we will see, the narrator knows when to speed up or slow down, which sounds to dwell upon, when to break into song, and so on. Our task in what follows will be to unearth some of these dynamic tendencies in a single performance. (Below is the Ewe version followed on p. 154 by the English. Sung interludes are in italics).

Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's story

(CD track 22)

Eglí kpàm!
Èglì né vá!
Egliɛ mé tsó sègɛ̃e bá dzè ŋútsu ɖé dzí à?
Wò dze dzì!

Mé vá dze nyɔnu ɖe dzi a?
Ò dze dzì!
Nútsu ɖé kplé srɔ
Wóvá le kákákákáká wó méle vi dzi ò
Eviɛdzidzi vá zu núxaxa ná nyɔ́nua
Álébé ɣesiaɣi ko e,
Nyɔ́nu 'a le nú ɖa ná ɳutsua
Álébé wó núxaxa gbèsiágbè kò énye bé
Áwò! ye ánɔ nui ɖa kákákákáká lé
'Ye srɔ̃ náa nɔ̀ àgblè dĕm
'Ye ya yì mǎa dzì vì ɖéké ɖéké ɖéké o zã́?
Álébé énɔ̀ konyí fa kákákáká
Gbèɖèká ndi wogafɔ́
Ɔutsu 'a gà yì gbĕmè
Égayi dɔwɔfé
Wò kpɔ́e kákáká wò bé
E, ye gagbɔ 'núyi ɖa gbé dzàntsì tɔ̃̌
Ê ké yì mằ dzì vì kúrákúrákura o zã̂?
Gàké, aa, édó dzi sígbe
Gavá kɔ́ núa ɖé dzò dzí, ga vá ɖa ʃétée
Vá kɔ́ núa ɖé taa
É dze mɔ́ gbɔ̀ 'gbèá me yigbé
É dze mɔ́ ko 'yá 'be o
Égbe yaa ɖê
Yewó dzì tsítre ɖé vimadzimadzi ɳú
Gàké édzè mɔ
Mi letsi ɖé àgbè ɳú lo, yoyoyo,
Mi letsi ɖé àgbè ɳú lo, yoyoyo,
Mi letsi ɖé àgbè ɳú lo, yoyoyo,
Mi letsi ɖé àgbè ɳú lo, gàtsìkú mé sẽ́a 'me wua o
Ẽe, hé wò kpɔ́ 'ɖókoe dze sí kákáká sígbe
É nɔ 'teʃé ná éɖókoe
Bé 'léké gódóo ò ɖó yi hé yìmằ dzìví ò élebé yà ɖi àpé
'yá taa é ɖì àpé
Dzè bòʃò mɔ́dzí
Éyiɛ kákákákáká vá ɖó módź
Ðó mɔ́ títína lè àfíɖé kò
Kásiá wòbé y'àkpɔ́ i
Ɔútsuví dzáa ɖe 'lé
Ɔutsuviɛ ko éke abɔme ɖó d'éè

Éya tsí kɔ́e àtúù
'òkóe dóɖé dzi me 'òbé
Yídzalélé! yè dzìvĭ égbe!
Áò! 'ye pé édzì ví lé zã̄?
Ékpɔ́ dzìdzɔ̀
Álébé wòkpɔ́ dzìdzɔ̀
Kɔ́ ɖèvié kɔ́ kpa
Ðe 'ó ɖó kedze mí ɖèká kɔ́ bláe le sŭ
Dze mɔ́
Gbèáme ɖóɖó kplí maɖomadó ko
É yɔ́ srɔ̃̌ ɖá
Égbe ɖê, yè dzì ví 'gbè
Ɔútsua tsí bé yí dzalélélé yi srɔ̃ dzì ví
Áò, yeó dzì ví!
Wó boa le ɖèvié trɔ́ kpɔ́
Le 'lé kpɔ́
O, ká 'me sí, éké yisí égbè
Égbe yaa mégale bɔbɔe ɖé ò
Ê'mí hé wò yie sígbe tsiɛ
Éɖa mpɔtɔe lálálálá
Kɔ́ amidzɛ̃ dóe lálálálá kɔ́e yin'ê
Gàké léké hé wòvá dzìviɛ ta dê,
Hé wòkɔ́ núa daɖe anyí ɖe waa
Ɔútsua le vindze kpɔ́
Ménya élémá wòá ga wɔ ɖê, ága ɖu núa ò
Wò lè ɖeviɛ trɔ́kpɔ́
Lè gàfòfŏ me hé wòkpɔ́ ɖèvié ɖê
Èkpɛ̃e ví dzání ɖé lè ɖèviɛ́ sí
Álébé ɖèvié lé kpɛ̃ea ɖé àsí
Wòle 'trɔ́kpɔ́
Wòle 'trɔ́kpɔ́
Égbemí xé wólè ɖèví 'mí trɔ́kpɔ́ mele éteʃé
Woyin
Nye srɔ̃ fúnɔ
Ðànú vá dónékɔ̀
Èfúnɔ
Ðànú vá dónékɔ̀
'gblèdèdè nényó náwò
Ðànú vá dónékɔ̀
'sitsatsa nényó náwò

Đànú vá dónékɔ̀
Enye srɔ̃̀ funɔ
Đànú vá dónékɔ̀
Nye srɔ̃̀ fúnɔ
Đànú vá dónékɔ̀
"gblèdèdè nényó náwò
Dànú vá dónékɔ̀
"sitsatsa nényó náwò
Dànú vá dónékɔ̀
Yì ɖé 'dzí
Yá wòkɔ́ núa da ɖé anyí
Ekpɛ̃e víɛ lè ɖèvié sí, ɖèvié tsí le 'trɔ́kpɔ́
Gàké éléké hé éyatsí vákpɔ́ pàpá
Hé kpɔ́ dàdá
Hé dzì lè 'dzɔ ta i
Ékɔ́ kpɛ̃a kɔ́ daɖé ètɔ́ gbɔ́, bé yewó n'ó ɖu mpɔtɔe lá
Le ɣeyíɣi viáɖé megbé ko, wóɖùnúa vɔ̀
Éléké dzì lè wodzɔ ta ɖê
Ɔútsua kplé nyɔ́nuɔ́ wófé 'fé hé wóa vá ɖê
Mélè tsɔ́tsɔ̃m náwó kúráa ò
Hé wóakɔ́ vi ákɔ́tsɔ́ gbèáme ákɔ́ vá àfé
Hé wóakpɔ́e dzesii bé nyatefé yeó dzìvì dê
Éyataa mélè tsɔ̀tsɔ̀ nɔ̂ kúráa ò
Álébé nyɔ́nu'a váwɔ̀ kpatakpata
Ɔútsua vá hò àgbèlì dodoe, wóvá hoe vùavùavùa
Amankaní kprùkprùkprùkprù
Wóvá kɔ́e kábákábákábákábá
'vá kɔ́e fude àgbèɛ́mè ne
Énumáké nyɔ́nua tsie vá tui ɖó
Vá kɔ́ núziwó daɖémè, kɔ tudo
Ɔutsua tsi, éléké 'o gblèdèwúi le énú hé wòvá dzì vìé ta,
Égbugbɔ kɔ́ kaa sɛ ɖé dzí nyúieɖé
Lê dé 'mè, lê dé 'mè, nlɔ̀è ɖé 'dzì nyúieɖé
Wó kɔ́taa ʊ̀u lé gbògblòo
Wòlè vìé yome
Álébé nyɔ́nua tsé le ngɔgbé
Wónyá zɔ sɛ̃́e
Letsí léké hé wó dóa gò lè bòmè, ɖó mɔ́me nenéko dê
Sɛ̃́e kodê
Đèvié tsɔ́ nlɔblé wó kpɛ̃e ɖé tèfé

Égbemí mele 'teʃé
Nele
Égbemí
Xé wò tsɔ́ nɔble 'ó kpẽe
Yá wò dzìhà dé bé:
Kpẽevínye tsí àgblèmè, meyi ɖé mává tsɔ̀è
Kpẽevínye tsí àgblèmè, meyi ɖé mává tsɔ̀è
Ètɔ́ tsi náwo me see o
Enɔ tsi náwo me see o
Ne sẽ tó ne kpɔ́è!
Tútúutú nele 'teʃé
Wónyá tsinɛ̂ sigbeɛ tútúutú bé méga yi o
Gàké ɖèvié bé gódóo, kpẽeví 'mí néhé méle yisí o ɖê
Yèmà 'dó àʃé le yetɔ́ kplé yenɔ tí ò
Hé wotsɛ́ nèlè vì dí kákáká ɖé
Ma 'ága kplɔ̀ viwoa ɖó ĭ
Nà vaa kɔ́ kpẽe ɖé 'tí ò à?
Àa, enú kemí hé mégbɔ̀ àsíwo ká gbé o, 'yá ko élĕ 'wɔ sígbe
Yá wòbé, aa, né kɔ́ yi ɖê
Névákɔ́ kpẽe vê
'Yá ɖèvíe trɔ́
'Yá woyi ɖé kpẽe kɔ́ʃé
Ðòdó kple maɖomaɖó o ko
Dzàtá
Laklẽ
Wó ámè vè kòé vá dógò ɖèvíe lé kplà
Wóbé, 'Óò
Ðèvíe 'nyé nyùíe dáami élé zâ?
Éna nyó ná ɖàɖà'
Énumáké wó kɔ́e xóxó, ɖèvié bé y'adzele wóŋú, àwò
Wòbé yèató fî, àwò
Wòbé yèató fî, àwò
Wòkɔ́e
Wòkɔ́e wòvá yi ɖé elãwó ʃé nɔ̀ʃé
Kítsá wóbé wónú ɖê
Elãwó ʃétée ʃòʃú
Wóle elã dí bé yewó kɔ́ne ɖaɖu háfí wómélè kpɔ̀kpɔ̀ o
Éyata wóʃé 'ʃétɔ́wó yi ɖé gbèámè yiɖé elã díʃé
Kɔ́ ɖèvíe vá tu ànyí klì
Ètɔ́ kplí ènɔ̌

Wódí ɖèvíe
Wòyi fî
Wógbugbɔgbɔ
Wóvá yi 'fî
"Ô! fífie fãa ko ɖèvíe náàbú zã̀?"
Wódíi ʃétéʃétéʃétéʃété
Àwò
Wómé kpɔ́e o
Ô, yá mè dzìví i
Yáma gatsí konɔ zã?
Élémá maabɔ́ amanié má zã̀?
Wó *ʃúdu* yi
Éna ányá sè à?
Gbèɖégbèɖé lo!
Wógbugbɔ vá yi
Éfímí ɖê
Nyɔ́nua wó nkú biã
Yá wòbé:
Miétó àdègbé, ee
Yewó tó àdègbé, ee
Né mekpɔ́wu tsê àdègbé wóyɔ́nɛ, meyi yee
Né nyemega kpɔ́ wu tsé àdègbé wóyɔ́nɛ, aye ayoo
Aa, hé wóyi hé mékpɔ́ wuo tsé, élebé néyì àʃé
Né wogakpɔ́ dzi tsé, élebé néyi àʃé ta ĩ
Srɔ̃tɔ́ kplí nyɔ́nua yewo tsé wó lɔ́ɖé'mè srãwò
Ô, kítsá mákpɔ́
Elãwó yaya
Wólè tɔ̀trɔ́tómè
Àlébé wóvá ma lã vòvòvò
Ame 'mí tɔ́wó n'âvá dí sabála, dzĕne
Kukɔ́ré, dzakubo
Nákɛ, awusá
Núvíví ŋanɛwó xé wókɔ́ wɔ̀o tsitotoewó
Nákɛtɔ́wó
Éya yí me le ya kísi yaa bé, kúrá ò
Èʃú 'emí gbagbé ye gbɔɔ́ i
Yeavá nyré yewó ɖú lè gbèdéɛ gbɔ́ háfí ágbɔ̀ vá ává gbà ʃúa
Yáta éyatsé lɔ́ɖe 'mè yiɖé àɖù nyré ʃé
Mele éteʃé
Tókemí ɖáa dzíee

Mànɔ́ tókemí ɖáa dziee
Kɔ́m da ɖé tókemí ɖáa dzi
Né mánɔ́ jóllèywó fé gbè sè ɖáa
Tókemí ɖáa dziee
Tókemí ɖáa dziee
Kɔ́m da dé tókemí ɖáa dzí
Mánɔ́ jóllèywó fé gbè sè ɖáa
Egbĕ yaa nelĕ se ɖáa
Éke hé yí mele, kísi le fímí lè àɖù nyrɛ́ krìdìkrìdì krìdìkrìdì
Álébé elã́ wófété wóvá dzo ɖé 'mè
'yá wóɖè kpákpálùvɔ̃e tsí,
Gbefi tsí
Blèkɔ́ tsí
'yáwó kɔ́ daɖé dèvié gbɔ́
Êmí èkpó hé wótu hé lé ame dé éme
Wó siá awusá ɖe èkpóa taame tee, kplé nkramawó
'yáwóe nyé fufutsikɔnuwó ta
Wólè kpóa taa me
Álébé wófété wóhéyi ɖé enúvívíwó dífé
Đèvié lè kpóame
Lè kpóame kákáká vá ɖó tèfédé ko dê
'yá wòyɔ́ blèkó ɖá
'yá wòbé yèɖè kúkú n'e
Èkpóame xé ye le ɖê
Yewó lɔ́me yá wúnu, 'yá ta dê, awusáemi hé lè dzìɛ me ɖê
Né tsɔ́ àvièɖé ɖóɖé né yèakɔ́ dé alɔ me ko ɖê
Né yeawɔe ko, né yewó lɔ́me né tási yàyá sígbè
O! blèkɔ́ tsé máà ha se o
Égɔme énye bé, éɖóe bé dê
Yewó gbɔ̀ tsivíví ɖu gbé, éɖunú sia nú tsí
Égbe mí mele 'tefé
Áma e 'nɔ dziwo
Éya tútúutú e'mí
Áma é 'nɔ dziwo
Etsi 'ma é, nɔ dzi wo
Gbèdzí nɔ lá, nɔ dzi wo
Bàtó nɔ lá, nɔ dzi wo
Gbèdzí nɔ lá, nɔ dzi wo
Kple, adele kumadele
Adele kumadele

Adele kumadele
Yá blèkɔ́ tsí méhá se o ló
Hé wònyá bé né éyi ódɔ̀mè tsí élè dzìdzǐ̬ fuɖé tsime né yewó áano taá
Elɔ̃ lɔbɔɔ ɖèká le kpɔndɔɔ kɔ́ ɖóɖá ɖèvíɛ
Éya tsíẽ kɔ́e dé alɔme
Le 'du "kpùkpùrû kpúkpú kpú kpùkpùrû kprúkprú"
Wònyá le 'du sígbe ko dê
Yá blèkó bé
Óò, tsié ɖu dèvié lè? Né 'ɖu núsíanú tsi, nè gbɔ̀ yìyì gbé
Yátă yà bí kɔ ɖê
Né yèakpɔ́e ɖá le xɔme bé déè
Awusá ɖèɖé du wole lé zã?
Wònyá ɖíɖí nkúme nyá ɖóɖá ko, pìawòo!
Wò túi ʃuɖe wó nkúmè
Blèkɔ́ ɖúɖú tome prípríprà
Wòle mínye pràɖà prìrìpràrà papapapa tsìrìrì kàràrà tsìrìrì kákákákáká
Wòbé yèa ʊu nkúa, wo hee, womíe
Kò ɖèvíe kpɔ́e dùu, 'léké hé blèkɔ́ le gbalagbala ʃo kòe
'ya wò ʊù hɔ́ɔ̀ kpóo ko, srào!
Égbe mí Wiseman lè 'teʃé
Nesúsú bé xeví yelé áfé
Nelé xeble
Nesúsú bé xeví yelé afé
Nelé xeble
Nesúsú bé xeví yelé afé
Nelé xeble
Nesúsú bé xeví yelé afé
Nele xeblee
Ényá lê xeble, dèvié dzó le wógbɔ́
Dèvié zɔ
Dze mɔ́
Lè ènɔ̀ kplí 'tɔ́ dí
Wòyi
wògbɔ
Wòyi
Wògbɔ
Égɔme énye bé
Né wòɖo gbɔ̀tógã́ lá
Ménya fínè wòabía se bé alólo ɖê,
"Fíne énye nɔnye wó kpɔ́mè, fíne énye tɔ́nye wó kpɔ́ mè?"

Ményáe o taa ɖé lá
Né wòyi mɔ́dzí
Wògbugbɔ vá tó mɔ́dzí
Wògbugbɔ vá yi
Wògbugbɔ
Fímí nɔ̀ kɔ́e le
Wòvá tsí àtsitre ɖé fímí
Kásiá wòbé yeakpɔ́ ĩ
Lã̃ wóamèvè ĩ
Yáwóe vá tu yi
Ɖèká bé, "Ɖèvíe lé ye o lé dé kpóme"
Ɖèká bé, "Kúrákúrákúrá ò, ménýé éya yé ò"
Névá né yewó tèdzì, né yewó dí tsɔ̀tsɔ̀ɛ ɖé
É'mí xé lé da de, né yewó vá dae bɔ̃n
Égbe ɖê, yewó máaɖù lã̃ èvè ò
Lã̀ ɖèká 'êmẽ xé wó kɔ̃ vê ná yewó ɖê
Édéami wúnú, 'yáta yewo ɖà dèká
Dèká kpɔ́e dũu
Dèvíe tsé lɔ̃ ɖé mè, gadze mɔ́
Álébé lãwó ƒétée
Náke, dzɛ̃ne, kukɔɖé núsianú tsɔ́láwó ƒétée, wóváɖó vì
Wókɔ̃ núa ƒété vá ƒú anyí vì
Kísi tsiɛ̃ vá ɖó
'hé nekpɔ́ kísi wó ɖú fiafiafiafia hé nâ fúgbagba i, éya tsé váɖó
Éyi héyi mele ĩ, Wóvá kɔ̃ gàzé gɑ̃́ ɖé ɖé dzòdzí
Kù tsi fo ɖé émè
Ètsié lè fɛ̀fié wùràwùrà wùràwùrà
Yá wóbé o, wódó àsí ɖa, lé lã̃ dámiɛ vɛ
Hɔe hé wónyá vu wɪ̀rrr, hɔ ʊ̀dù kákáaká váaɖɔ́ fímíɖáa, gblà ìi
Ameɖéké mélè xɔ̃̌ mè ò
Blèkɔ́!
Amee ɖé?
Blèkɔ́ bé,
"Yiee, eritemu tuutuutuutuutuutuutuurì."
"Blèkɔ́, ameɛ miékɔ́ dé xɔ me ɖé, fíne nekɔ́ ameɛ́ daɖê?"
Wòbé "Eritemu tuutuutuutuutuutuutuurì"
Ô! Wóbé àsí néká gbefi
"Gbefi, miawó wóɖeda ɖé ameɛ gbó.
Fine ameɛ tó lè xɔ me?'
Gbefi be, "Aaa,"

"Étófí, wòkeɖé fi̋, wòtófí wòkeɖé fi̋,"
"Wòtófí wòkeɖé fi̋, wòga tó fi̋ wòkeɖé fi̋"
"Gbefi, étó fíne wòkeɖé fi?"
Wówɔ̀ fétée, mé nyá ò
Àmè èt͡ɔ́lía nyé kpákpálùʊ̀ɔ́é
"Kpákpálùʊ̀ɔ́é, tèvá, tèvá, tèvá."
"Lémá mie wɔ ameɛ má 'fé wò tèdzì le xɔ mè?"
Kpákpálùʊ̀ɔ́é nɔ anyí 'ákáa bé
"Nyè mè kpɔ́e o,
Òhéè̀,
Nyè mè kpɔ́e o,
Òhéè̀'
Éyata ɖê
Né miekpɔ́ blèkɔ́
Blèkɔ́ wɔ́ nkú biã *gbagbagbagba*
Blèkɔ́ melɔ̃ dzoa saa yiɛ ɖé àtí mè ò
Ènúi mí hé ɖèvíe ɖu tú ɖé wó nkú me
Né nyá wɔ ko ɖê
Élè anyígbá tsă̋
Wókpete*ʃ*é le anyí t͡ɔ́
Wòle núa dí
Enúa le vé kákákáaká, vá keɖé égbe wónkekewó mè
Éyata blèkɔ́ ɖê
Météŋú yiɛ ɖe àtíme ɖé nɔ̀vièwó tí o loo
Yá èvèliá
Éya énye gbefi
Né mìekpɔ́ gbefi
Né nenyá kpɔ́e lè bò*ʃ*ò mɔ́dzí fã̄a ko, étó fi
Sẽ̄e ko ɖé naaga kpɔ́e, wòaga váyi fã̄a
Ɖèvíe xé wógblẽ̄ ɖé égbɔ́
Xé wòlè dìdì
Éle dí kákákáaká vá keɖé égbe
Égbe loo
Yá kpákpálùʊ̀ɔ́e tsíẽ̄ ɖê
Hé dèvíe hé bú da ɖé édzí sígbe o, xé méga nyá ta ɖéke le énu do de,
"yá wòbé a lólo,
"Nyè mè kpɔ́e o,
Òhée'
"yáta né miekpɔ́ kpákpálùʊ̀ɔ́e ɖê
Énanɔ̀ tsìtsìnámi bé

"Nyè mè kpɔe o,
Òhéè"
Sígbe ɖèvíe ɖê
Éyaa mékpɔ́ o
Yá, xé miégbɔɔ fífíe ɖe
Yá gbòlòtɔ́wó ƒé mamá
Dó àtùfù kɛ̀ngɛ̀lɛ̀kɛ̀e
'yá wòyɔ̀m
'yá wòkɔ́ nám bé ɖê,
Mákɔ́ vá ná yevúawó hé élè àblàdzo meme me lè dzò gbɔ́ ɖe
Né wónewó kɔ́ mè àblàdzó memĕ
Eyoo
Eyuoo
Dze nu me ó!
Dze tso tógó bue me loo

The tale *kpam*!
Let the tale come!
Did the tale not go *segẽe* and fell on a certain man?
It fell on him!
Did it not also fall on a certain woman?
It fell on her!
A man and his wife
They were there for a long time, they were not having a child
Childbearing became a source of grief for the woman
And so, all the time
The woman was cooking for the man
And her daily lament was that
"Awo, will she continue to cook like this,
Her husband be farming,
Yet she herself will not give birth to a child?"
So she lamented a lot.
One morning she got up from bed as usual
The man had gone to the bush
He had gone to work
She looked hard at the situation and wondered
Ee, is she going to cook this thing elaborately again,
And still not have a child?
But, aa, she bore her pain like that
And put the food on the fire and cooked it completely

And put the food on her head
Set off for the bush
As she set off, she said,
As for today,
Her heart stood up against childlessness
But she set off all the same
Bathe in preparation for life, yoyoyo
Bathe in preparation for life, yoyoyo
Bathe in preparation for life, yoyoyo
Bathe in preparation for life, getting old before you die could easily kill you
Yes, when she recognized herself like this
She was witness unto herself
That the way she was not having a child, she dressed elegantly
So she got ready
Set off for the farm
She kept going until she reached the road
Reached the middle of the road somewhere
Suddenly, as she looked
Here was a little boy
The boy stretched out his arms towards her
She received him *atuu*
She lifted him into the air, she said
Yi dzalele! She has given birth to a child today
Ao, is it she who has given birth like this?
She was happy
So, she rejoiced
Put the child on her back
Took one of her cloths and tied the child *su*
Started on her way
No sooner had she reached the bush than
She called out to her husband
Today, she has given birth
The man too said, *Dzalele*, his wife has given birth
Ao! they have given birth.
They took their time turning the child around
Holding him
Good fortune has touched her hand today
As for today, it is not a joking matter
Meanwhile when she was going to the farm
She cooked *mpɔtɔe* [mashed cocoyam] *lalalala*

Used palm oil to decorate it *lalalala*, took it to him
But because of the way they had given birth
When she put the food down *waa*
The man was looking at the child
He did not know how he would do to eat the food again
They were examining the child
At the time that she found the child
The child was carrying a beautiful small flute
And the child was holding the flute in his hands
They were looking at the child
They were looking at him
The day they were turning the child around I am there
You were
My wife, the pregnant mother
Cook and feed it to custom
The pregnant mother
Cook and feed it to custom
May farming be rewarding for you
Cook and feed it to custom
May trading be good for you
Cook and feed it to custom
My wife, the pregnant mother
Cook and feed it to custom
My wife, the pregnant mother
Cook and feed it to custom
May farming be rewarding for you
Cook and feed it to custom
May trading be good for you
Cook and feed it to custom
Go on with it!
So she put the food down
The child had his little flute, the child was also examining it
But the way he, too, had come and seen his father
And seen his mother
And because his heart was rejoicing
He left the flute by his father while they ate the *mpɔtɔe*.
After a short period, they finished eating
Because they were so excited
The man and the woman's return to the village
It was not going quickly enough for them

That they would take the child from the bush home
So that it will be seen that truly they had given birth
That is why it was not going quickly enough for them
And so the woman hurried up
The man uprooted some grown cassava, he uprooted it *vuavuavua*
He uprooted cocoyam *kprukprukprukpru*
Took it very quickly
And put it in the bush
Soon the woman too came and joined him
And put things inside
The man too, the way his farm clothes were on him before the child arrived
He took a piece of string and tied it very well
Tucked it in, tucked it in, tied it firmly
He bared his chest *gbogbloo*
He was following his child
And the woman, too, was in front
They had not walked a long time
A distance of about the time it takes to get from the farm to the main road
When all of a sudden
The child forgot his flute on the farm
That day I am there
You are
That day
When he forgot his flute
Then he sang a song that
My little flute is left on the farm, I am going to fetch it
My little flute is left on the farm, I am going to fetch it
Your father told you, you didn't listen
Your mother told you, you didn't listen
You hardened your ears, it serves you right!
Exactly, you are there!
They truly told him not to go
But the child said that unless he has the flute in his hands
He will not go home with his father and mother
And you, knowing that you are wanting a child so badly
Why don't you go with your child
To go and find the flute?
Aa, the thing that will not touch your hands, that is what is happening to her like that.
So they said, *aa*, he should go
And bring the flute

And so the child turned
And he went to get the flute
As soon as he arrived in the bush
The lion
The leopard
The two of them just came and met the child *kpla*!
They said, "oo
This child is good and full of fat
It will be good for cooking"
Without wasting time they picked up the child already, the child tried to pass them, but no
He wanted to pass here, but no
He wanted to pass there, but no
They picked him up
They took him to the land of animals
By the time they arrived
All the animals had gathered
They had been looking for meat to cook and eat, but they were not finding any
So their leaders had gone to the bush in search of meat
Brought the child and set it on the ground *kli*
Meanwhile, the father and the mother
They searched for the child
They went here
They came back
They then went there
"How can the child disappear so quickly?"
They searched and searched and searched for the child
No
They did not find him
"O, how can I have given birth
And still remain childless?
How will I tell the news?"
She run there
Will this matter be hearable?
Never, never
She returned and passed
At that place
The woman's eyes were red
And she said
We are going to the hunt, yee
They are going to the hunt, yee

If I find and kill, it will be called a hunt
If I don't find and kill, it will still be called a hunt
Ah, if she goes and does not find something to kill, she will still have to return home
If she finds something she will still have to return home
So husband and wife took off, *srawo*!
In the meantime
As for the animals
They were dancing around
So they divided the work among various animals
Those whose job it was to bring onion, onion
Pepper, pepper
Firewood, cloves
Various "sweet" things used in making thick soups
The firewood people
As for the rat, he said
Because of the bones he was going to crack
He was going to the blacksmith's to sharpen his teeth
So he too went to get his teeth sharpened
I am there
On top of that hill
I will be on top of that hill
Put me on top of that hill
So that I can be hearing the voices of my girlfriends
On top of that hill
I will be on top of that hill
Put me on top of that hill
So that I can be hearing the voices of my girlfriends
You were truly hearing their voices!
While this was happening, the rat was busy sharpening his teeth *kridikridi kridikridi*
So all the animals went and jumped inside
And they selected the butterfly
The bush mouse
The dove
And put them in charge of the captured child
As for the enclosure that was built in which they put the captured child
They put cloves to dry on top of the enclosure, and ginger
Those were the ingredients for the soup
They were on top of the enclosure
And so all of them had gone in search of sweet things
The child was in the enclosure

In the enclosure for a long time until it reached a point
He called the dove
And said, he begged him,
Because of the enclosure in which he was
His mouth was too stale, and therefore the cloves that are on top
He should give him just a little bit to put in his mouth
And do it so that his mouth will stop getting stale
O, the dove too would not listen
That is because he was so determined that
They were going to eat a delicious soup, whatever the child ate
That day I am there
Ama ee, your mother gave birth to you
That is exactly it
Ama ee, your mother gave birth to you
Water Ama, your mother gave birth to you
The one who stays in the forest, your mother gave birth to you
The one who stays in the swamp, your mother gave birth to you
The one who stays in the forest, your mother gave birth to you
Kple, adele kumadele
Adele kumadele
Adele kumadele
So the dove did not listen
Knowing that even if it goes into the child's stomach it will only increase the soup that they were going to drink
He took an enormous piece and offered it to the child
The child took it and put it in his mouth
He was eating it *kpupkurukpukpukpu*
As he was eating it like that
The dove said
"Oo, What is the child eating like that? Whatever you eat, you are going to go."
So he wanted to bend his neck
And look inside the child's room to find out
Whether it is just the cloves he was eating like so
As soon as he stretched his face to see it, *piawoo*!
The child spat it in the dove's face
The dove developed diarrhoea
He shat *praprapririprara papapapa tsida kiri kakakakakaka*
He wanted to open his eyes, the child squeezed him
So the child looked intently, when he saw the way the dove was
He opened the door quietly and *srao*
That day, Wiseman is there

You thought you had caught a bird
You only caught a bird's tail
You thought you had caught a bird
You only caught a bird's tail
You thought you had caught a bird
You only caught a bird's tail
You thought you had caught a bird
You only caught a bird's tail
He had indeed caught only the bird's tail, the child ran away from them
The child walked
Set off on his way
Searching for his mother and father
He went
He came back
He went
He came back
This is because
When he reaches a big town
He does not know where he can ask that
"Where is my mother's house, where is my father's house?"
Because he cannot find his way
When he goes one way
He returns to follow his father's way
He returns this way
He returns that way
The place where his mother picked him up
He went and stood there
Before he realized
Two animals
They came to meet him
One said, "This is the child we caught and put in the enclosure"
The other said, "No way, it is not him"
He should come so that they leave, they should hurry up
The one they already have at home, let them go and cook that instead
Today they will not eat two animals
The one animal that was brought to them
It has so much fat so they will cook only one animal
One looked closely at the child
The child also went on, set off on his way
So, all the animals

Firewood, onion, pepper, carriers of all things, they arrived *vi*
They came and put all their things down *vi*
The rat also arrived
And if you see the rat's teeth, *fiafiafiafia* for bone cracking, he too arrived
As I am saying this they came and put a huge pot on the fire
Poured water in it
The water was boiling *wurawura wurawura*
And they reached out to get hold of the fatty animal
With the opening of the door *warrrr* they ran all the way there *gblaii*
There was no one inside the room
"Dove,
Where is the person?"
Dove said,
"Yiee, eritemu *tuutuutuutuutuutuutuuri*"
"Dove, the person we put in the enclosure, where did you put him?"
He said, "Eritemu *tuutuutuutuutuutuutuuri*"
O! they said, get hold of the bush mouse.
"Bush mouse, you were the ones put in charge of the child
Where is the child?"
The bush mouse said, "Aaa
He passed here, he ended up there; He passed here, he ended up there
He passed here, he ended up there; He passed here, he ended up there"
"Bush mouse, he passed where, he ended up where?"
They asked and asked, but he did not know
The third person was the butterfly
"Butterfly, come closer, come closer, come closer
How did you do the person so that he escaped from the enclosure?"
The butterfly sat for a while and said slowly
"I did not see him,
Ohee
I did not see him
Ohee"
That is why
When you see the dove to this day
His eyes are very red *gbagbagbagba*
The dove does not like to climb trees
The thing which the child ate and spat in his face
When time passes a little
He is searching the ground
His buttocks are touching the ground

He is searching for the thing
The thing is paining him a lot to these very days
That is why, as for the dove
He cannot climb a tree like his fellow animals
And the second
That concerns the bush mouse
When you see the bush mouse
As soon as you see him on the road to the farm, after a little while he passes here
After a little while, you will see him again, he will come and pass again
The child who was left in his charge
He is still searching for him
He is searching all the time for him to this very day
Voice!
And the butterfly
When the child disappeared on him, and he did not know what to do
Then he said that
"I have not seen him
Ohee"
That is why when you see the butterfly
He will be telling you that
"I did not see him
Ohee"
It is the child
That is whom he has not seen
So when we were coming here
One of the grandmothers of the Gbòlò people
Dressed elaborately
She called me
And she gave it to me that
I should bring it to these white people who are roasting plantain by the fire
That they may use it to roast roasted plantain
Alright
Alright
A seasoned mouth
A seasoned mouth from a special place.

The deep structure of the Northern Ewe folktale

The Northern Ewe folktale has four "deep" functions, determined by order, proportion, and accent. These are, the Opening Formula; the Story Proper; the

Moral; and the Closing Formula. This closed, finite structure subtends an open, multiply implicative internal structure. So the folktale is best understood in terms of a dialectic between the relative predictability of large-scale form and the relative unpredictability of local contents.

Because of their remoteness and abstract nature, deep structures may or may not be accessible to interpretation; they may or may not carry invariant expressive attributes. Still, we can derive from the above scheme a pair of competing expressive attributes stemming respectively from duration and stress. The first is quantitative and in that sense objective, the second is qualitative and subjective.

The first attribute of the deep structure concerns the relative durations of sections measured by narrative time. In general, the opening and closing formulas are comparable in length and constitute the shortest portions of the tale. The Moral varies, but is usually longer than the opening and closing sections. The Story Proper lasts longest. Measured by lines, which, because they conform to breath groups, are for the most part comparable in length, Gbòlò Kɔ́suá's story may be segmented as follows:

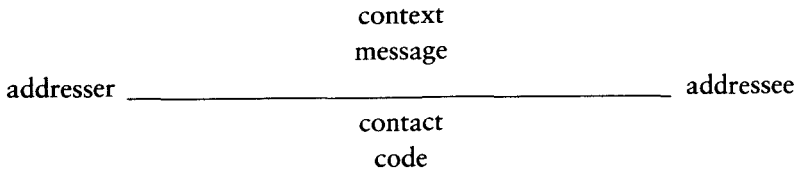
> Opening Formula: lines 1–6
> Story Proper: lines 7–336
> Moral: lines 337–68
> Closing Formula: lines 369–79.

Line lengths yield the ratio 6:330:32:11, which may in turn be represented proportionally as 1:55:5:2. These proportions are not untypical of Northern Ewe tales.

A competing framework for understanding the deep structure is the weight or narrative force with which each section is articulated. The strongest beginning accent occurs in the articulation of the Opening Formula. The reason is to claim "space" for the forthcoming narrative by setting a pitch of high enough intensity that captures the audience's attention immediately. Because the Story Proper is internally coherent and complete, it begins not at a high dynamic as did the Opening Formula, but at a low dynamic, working its way through a series of detours and turning points to a structural high point at or near its end. We thus have a detachable temporal/rhythmic structure embedded in a larger one. While the Opening Formula is rhythmically regular and predictable, complete with near-metrical constraints, the Story Proper is not. Its overall "rhythmic profile" may approximate that of a dynamic curve, but, apart from its obvious use of speech rhythm, there is no telling what specific rhetorical devices will implement this shape. The Moral slows down the tempo of delivery in order to convey, in didactic tones, the message of the folktale. It is immaterial whether the moral is banal or profound, true or truistic, familiar or strange. Its slow delivery merely ensures its communication; it does not guarantee its significance. Finally the

Closing Formula returns, in near symmetrical fashion, to the formulaic character of the opening, the only difference being that there is no structural need for a heightened "pitch" in these closing moments. A rough representation of the dynamic of the deep structure might be something like High–Gradual–Lower–Low, where "Gradual" itself is constituted in a form like Lower–High–Low. If we now roughly superimpose the qualitative aspects of the deep structure stemming from narrative weight over the quantitative aspects as determined by durational proportion, we observe parallels as well as divergences. For example, the Story Proper remains, of course, the center of the narration, reproducing the dynamic shape of the entire structure. Its qualitative and quantitative profiles reinforce each other. By contrast, the Opening Formula achieves a high qualitative measure by virtue of its ordinal position, but it is low on the quantitative scale, while the Closing Formula is both short and at a low dynamic.

How does communication take place during a folktale performance? Although we cannot assert without qualification that folktale performance constitutes a "system of communication," we can at least analyze some of its communicative dimensions. For this purpose, I will borrow a model familiar to literary theorists and popularized by Roman Jakobson:[3]



Like the "speech acts" which Jakobson analyzes, the "total situation" of a folktale performance exhibits each one of these features. But modifications are necessary in order to reflect a Northern Ewe sensibility. The addresser and addressee are not fixed but variable. Although there is a single narrator who, as the addresser, actually tells the story and so preserves its narrative thread, this role shifts several times during a performance, and is in fact inconceivable without other addressers.

The addressee, the listening audience, is of course a participating audience, which means that, from time to time, an individual addressee will relinquish his or her role as an addressee and become an addresser. This happens every time a song or rhyme is interpolated. At such moments, the main narrator or addresser becomes an addressee. Another variation on this shift of function derives from the communal impulse in Northern Ewe narratives. As we have often observed, the narrator is not an individual but a "voice," a genuine spokesperson. Empirically, this produces moments of "double speaking," moments with more than one addresser. Yet another variation on the addresser–addressee dichotomy occurs during those times when the entire group of performers sings a song or

speaks a rhyme. Here the distinction between addresser and addressee collapses insofar as each addresser becomes his or her own addressee. Of course, depending on the actual content of the song or rhyme, addressers could still be "others."

The context of folktale performance is always a recreational one, although, here as elsewhere, the "message" – returning to Jakobson's functions – is not necessarily a trivial one. In fact, it may sometimes harbor a "deep thought" or philosophical investment of the culture. Often, there is a clear, if stern, lesson on how to conduct one's life. Contact is made directly, by sound waves traveling from the mouth of the addresser to the ears and mind of the addressee. Not surprisingly, the code comes in for a great deal of emphasis. Jakobson has suggested that emphasis on the code for its own sake is a way of highlighting the metalinguistic dimension of language. Northern Ewe practice appears to support this proposition: folktale performance provides an opportunity for participants to display an impressive range of rhetorical techniques, including those that enable a foregrounding of the sheer sound and energy of spoken Ewe.

From deep to surface structure: Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's story

On the evening of 14 August 1986, I recorded a performance of folktales in the town of Pekí-Blengo by members of the *Miwɔe Nényó Hábɔ̀bɔ̌* led by W. I. C. Dowoeh. The folktale studied here was told by Mrs. Grace Dzasa, affectionately known as Gbòlò Kɔ́súa (Gbòlò woman born on Sunday). A transcription of the complete Ewe text together with an English translation is given on pp. 144–163. The following discussion aims to highlight certain aspects of Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's performance that might help the listener appreciate better the recorded performance. I will consider each of the four deep-structural functions in turn.

The Opening Formula. Northern Ewe folktales usually begin with a formula like the following:

Narrator: Mìsè glí loo!	Listen to the tale, loo!
Audience: Glì névá!	Let the tale come!
Narrator: Glì tsó ðùu va dze X dzi!	The tale went a long way and landed on X!
Audience: Wòdze dźi!	It landed on him!
Narrator: Wògadze Y dźi	And it landed on Y
Audience: Wòdze dźi	It landed on him
Narrator: M'é vá lè ò à? . . .	Were we not living? . . .

One function of the formula is to set the tale in motion by announcing the fact of narration. It is as if, in Jakobson's terms, the "phatic" mode of communication, the mode that ensures that the contact is working, is being tested at the outset: "Listen to the tale." The audience responds by saying that it is ready. A second function is to identify the protagonists. There may be two, three, or four

of these, their roles often relatable dyadically: man and wife; small-legged man and big-stomached man; spider and family; and so on.

The rhythmic aspects of this opening formula follow from these two functions. Setting the tale in motion is best achieved by dwelling on open vowels for purely sonic, attention-grabbing effect. For example, the word *loo* at the end of line 1 is an intensifier which narrators often prolong. Similarly, *ʊ̀uu* in line 3 conveys a sense of elaboration or expansion. It is thus given accentual and durational prominence. Substitutes for *ʊ̀uu* are, of course, conceivable; I have heard *vùnyà vùnyà*, *káká káká*, and *sásá sásá*. All three are reduplicative intensifiers, instances of sound symbolism. Each is designed to capture a superlative sense of distance (or extent) traveled by the folktale before it settled on one person, animal, or object. And distance, in turn, contributes to the exotic value and hence credibility of the tale.

Gbòlò Kɔ́súa begins her tale, not with the standard "Mîsè glí loo," but with a structural variant: "Eglí kpàm!" The word "kpàm" is purely descriptive, and bears the greater accent of the two words. It symbolizes a sudden happening, perhaps the hitting of one object against another. The effect of its explosive sound is to arrest attention. In her third line, Gbòlò Kɔ́súa uses the descriptive word *sègɛ̀ɛ̀*, pronounced so that the second syllable is extended to three or four times the length of the first. Like *ʊ̀uu*, *sègɛ̀ɛ̀* symbolizes and describes elaborate, perhaps even overelaborate presentation. Thus, an elaborately dressed woman, perhaps one with a huge headkerchief, two or three cloths, lots of beads and bangles, and padded buttocks: such a woman could be said to be "dressed *sègɛ̀ɛ̀*."

Complementing the functioning of sound symbolism or iconicity on the lexical level are repetition and parallelism on a larger, syntactical level. The larger rhythm of Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's opening derives partly from the parallelism and opposition between lines 3 and 5, and partly from the refrain-like repetition of line 4 as line 6. Lines 3 and 5 are parallel because they name objects on which the tale fell; but they also set up an opposition between man and woman, and between a statement and a question. By asking, "Did it not also fall on a certain woman?" the narrator appeals to self-evident knowledge. This technique is commonly used to assert the commonality of certain kinds of knowledge and to reinforce the communality of narration.

In sum, the rhythmic profile of Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's opening formula is a near-periodic regularity in which the audience's stylized and "static" responses contrast and interact with the narrator's more dynamic progression from an attention-grabber (line 1) to the naming of protagonists in two units of comparable length. Iconicity plays a key role in this articulation.

The Story Proper. At the beginning of line 7, Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's dynamic drops momentarily. This is as it should be, for after the high pitch of the introduction,

the beginning of the story proper must return to a lower dynamic in order to begin the long, gradual and deliberate ascent towards the high point.

The story proper is told across lines 7–336, and includes all the interludes. Undoubtedly, this section forms the heart of the tale. Gbòlò Kɔ́súa is obviously a skilled narrator. She varies her points of emphasis, uses numerous asides, accelerates and decelerates the pace of the narration, and pauses to reflect on her own performance. In short, she brings to life, in a wonderfully vivid way, an old and familiar story. I will not attempt to give a diachronic account of her narration here, since that is liable to get tedious. Instead, I will point to a few habits and devices that enliven the rhythmic dimension of performance.

Gbòlò Kɔ́súa performs her story in a semi-poetic form. She utilizes breath groups as the main principle of segmentation. The story therefore develops more the character of poetic rhythm than that of prose rhythm. Because she is fully aware that she is being listened to and helped along by her audience, Gbòlò Kɔ́súa allows the gaps between sentences and phrases to be filled in. There is not, however, a metronomic punctuation of the narrative as found, for example, in one of the Akpafu prayers analyzed in Chapter 2. But although there is no externalized tactus or regulative beat, one suspects that Gbòlò Kɔ́súa relies on some subliminal level on a hidden – sometimes not so hidden – regularity. Inevitably, poetic rhythm turns normative, encouraging the listener to perceive excursions into the realm of ordinary language as departures from a norm. It is this fluid movement that characterizes the overall narrative.

Let us consider a few striking moments of narrative regularity, moments in which the tactus emerges, as it were, from the background into the foreground. One such moment occurs between lines 56 and 58, where the woman, having "produced" a child, arrives at the farm, and breaks the news to her husband. The recurring phrase is "dzì vi" (give birth), and its recurrence lends a regularity to the narrative. It is but a small step from here to the more obvious rhythmic regularity heard later in rhymes and songs.

Enumeration of persons, animals, or objects also produces periodic regularity. When the child in the forest is discovered by two wild animals (lines 148–50), Gbòlò Kɔ́súa takes time over their names: *Dzàtá* (lion), *Laklɛ̃* (leopard). This deliberate enumeration momentarily establishes a periodicity that is projected on to the next line, 150. In other words, although lines 148 and 149 have two syllables each, line 150, with its twelve syllables, culminating in the onomatopoeic "kplà" describing the sudden meeting between boy and animals, is forced into the previous periodic mold. Again, between lines 194 and 198, Gbòlò Kɔ́súa enumerates the ingredients needed for making soup: onions, pepper, cloves, and so on. The deliberate listing produces a regularity in periodic structure. Similarly, lines 215–18, which contain a list of the three animals that were asked to watch the child while others went in search of ingredients, sound periodic in this performance.

Moments of urgency and suspense also give rise to incipient regularity. Lines 154–56, for example, describe the child's attempt to escape from his captors; each preliminary attempt fails. Gbòlò Kɔ́súa uses the negative "àwò" to describe the outcome of each attempt. The three-fold occurrence of "àwò" accumulates a periodic sense. Also, in lines 166–68 the parents' desperate search for their child – after foolishly letting him return alone to the forest – is conveyed in the rhythms of a syntactic opposition.

After he has escaped from the animals, the child looks for his parents. Gbòlò Kɔ́súa describes the search with what is perhaps the longest sequence of the kind of periodic rhythm I have been talking about. This occurs in lines 275–80, which consist mainly of two-syllable units or breath groups. Lines 286–89 provide further description of this search, following a similar rhythmic pattern.

A special place must be reserved for the series of interrogations that take place after the child's escape from his animal captors. Recall that three animals were asked to guard the child. Each is summoned to the presence of the rest of the animals and questioned. Blèkɔ́, the dove, speaks in animal language, unintelligible to Ewe speakers, but of interest for its purely phonological value: "Eritemu tuutuutuutuutuutuutuurì," with an accelerando on the latter word. Here Gbòlò Kɔ́súa slows down her narration to deliver the accents of a foreign language and also to convey Blèkɔ́'s extreme sense of embarrassment. Kpákpálùʊ̃ʒ́é (butterfly), when questioned, speaks in the narrator's language, but in accents so slow that they approximate the rate at which it flaps its wings. The point here is to teach this aspect of insect behavior. In the phrase "I did not see him, ohee," the word "ohee" reproduces the intonational contour of "I did not see him" for purely sonic parallelism. As for Gbefi, the bush mouse, his dashing to and fro in the forest is conveyed in the repetitions and accelerated rate of delivery of the words, "He passed here, he ended up there; he passed here, he ended up there" (lines 325–26).

Iconicity is exploited elsewhere in Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's narration without the attendant periodicity. For example, the word sŭ (line 52), pronounced with a short glide up the vowel, mirrors the neatness and precision of the knot tied by the mother to secure the child on her back. In lines 109–11, the action of uprooting various foodstuffs is described iconically. Cassava is uprooted "vùavùavùa," while cocoyam is pulled out of the earth "kprùkprùkprùkprù." Both activities happen "kábákábákábákábá" (quickly). These are all instances of reduplication, that is, the occurrence two or more times in immediate succession of the same syllabic pattern. Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's story is full of them, as the following examples will attest.

The action of sharpening the rat's teeth is described by the sounds "kridikridi kridikridi" (line 213). The teeth look extremely shiny, that is "fiafiafiafia" (line 308). Again, in line 248, two words describing magnitude are performed with considerable realism by Gbòlò Kɔ́súa: *lɔ́bɔɔ* and *kpɔ́ndɔɔ*, which describe the size

of the cloves that were made available to the captive child. Each word is performed with an unusually long second syllable. The boiling of water (line 311) is imitated by the sounds "wurawura wurawura." Probably the funniest moment in Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's performance occurs in line 250 where she imitates the sound of chewing cloves. The explosive "kpùkpùrû" is used to make music, music that, in the tale, is meant to distract the child's captors into wondering what it was that was making him chew so noisily.

Iconicity has the effect of enlivening the "spatial" dimension of narrative. Literal depictions and descriptions, symbolic imitations, and self-evident mimesis, exaggerated though some of them are, lend a particular vividness to the narrative. They also provide an opportunity for the audience to contribute their own versions and quota of imitative noises. An example occurs at one of the crucial turning-points in the story, line 257, where the child in captivity, having chewed the cloves, spits into the faces of his captors. Line 257 is performed in accelerando fashion, culminating in the onomatopoeic *pìawòo*, performed by participants. Interestingly, some of them utter noises that do not sound like "pìawòo," but that are meant to capture the effect of spitting on the captors' faces. The intention, in other words, is the same, but the resultant sound is diverse.

Functioning alongside reduplicated syllables are verbal intensifiers. Gbòlò Kɔ́súa never misses an opportunity to dwell on a long vowel, so that normative patterns of short–long often become short–very long. In musical metaphor we have not quaver followed by crotchet, but quaver followed by minim. Words like "sègɛ̃e" (line 3), "ʃétée" (line 24), "gódóo" (line 37), "àtúù" (line 45), and "gbògblòo" (line 118), are a good illustration of this rhetorical habit. Similarly, one-syllable words with long syllables are pronounced where appropriate with extra length. Examples include "dzáa" (line 43), "dūu" (line 302), "fáa" (line 352) and "sɛ́e" (line 353).

There is obviously a great deal more to be said about Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's use of language. I have focused here on the sound of words and phrases in keeping with my general concern to illuminate the rhythmic aspects of narration. Probably the most important devices stem from a "musicalizing" of the Ewe language. Sound symbolism is nothing if not a transposition into phonological or sonic space of a semantic reality. Both the periodicity stemming from enumerations and the extensive use of reduplication contribute to the rhythmic character of Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's story. Rhythm, we may hazard a generalization, is discoverable in all the dimensions of language.

The interludes

No folktale performance is complete without interludes. Indeed, to speak of "folktale interludes" and thus to imply that the folktale is conceivable apart

from its sung interludes is to misrepresent the holistic nature of the genre. Sometimes, it is not merely song that is included, but also dance, depending on the mood of the performance and the desires and skills of participants. And when songs are sung, they are not infrequently accompanied by a "light" instrumental accompaniment played by an *akaye*, a bell, or a small drum. Just as the word *ʋu* or *ʋuɔ* in Ewe denotes both the physical drum and the dance (including singing), so *glitótó* as an event is understood to include performative acts other than the mere narration of a story.

Folktale interludes perform several functions. For example, they provide variety in the telling of the tale. By leaving the realm of speech and entering into the realm of song, the performance acquires an additional temporal dimension. Interludes also serve to reconfigure the addresser–addressee relationship. When a member of the audience introduces a song, he or she takes over the role of narrator. The main narrator then becomes an addressee, part of the audience. An interlude may be so "sweet" that it may be repeated a few times. Invariably, the interlude is in Call–Response mode, but with a rotation of Callers. Each change of Caller produces a corresponding change in the addresser–addressee relationship. The main narrator may or may not join in a particular interlude: she may use this opportunity to rest her voice or regroup before resuming narration. Also, some interludes are performed solo either because the tale prescribes that particular mode of performance or because participants simply do not know the song.

An interlude frequently serves to emphasize a point, to encourage further contemplation of its significance. One might draw an analogy between the form of the folktale and the form of eighteenth-century opera (Mozart's, for example). The normative distinction between secco and accompagnato recitative, on the one hand, and aria, on the other, rests on a view of recitative as, for the most part, musically arid, a mechanism for the plot and action to be advanced; arias, by contrast, are musically rich, slowing down the action so that the music, or more precisely the "voice," can be savored. Similarly, the verbal content of a Northern Ewe folktale advances the narrative while the musical interludes delay it.

There are two types of interlude: those that are tale-specific, and those that, although not specific to the story, are or can be directly or at least indirectly related to the theme being developed. For example, there is a story from Ho-Bankoe about a man who buys a cow for each of his wives every time she is pregnant. He does this because he hopes that they will give birth to boys, not girls. Unfortunately for one wife, however, she went and gave birth to a girl. The poor girl became an object of scorn. Even before she was old enough, she was being made to do a lot of farm work, more than her brothers did. So, each time she performed some difficult chore, she lamented as follows:

My father bought a cow for his wives
So that they might give birth to boys
My mother went and turned me into a girl.

The nature of the lament suggests that the words are specific to this particular story. But although they "belong" to specific tales, tale-specific interludes may be incorporated into other contexts, especially if one can establish a link, however tenuous, between the themes of song and story.

The second type of interlude is one which resonates directly with the sentiment or moral being developed at the particular moment in the tale. For example, on hearing about a betrayal, I might introduce a song such as the following: "Fear every human being, even your own spouse." Interludes provide opportunities for realizing or even supplementing the significance of a tale, leading the narrative into spaces that were not planned from the beginning. This is another sense in which the folktale is communally generated.

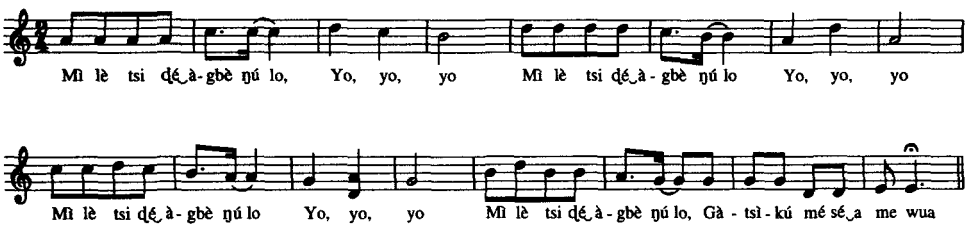
Each of the two types of interlude may be subdivided further into songs and spoken rhymes. Although the distinction does not register in Ewe discourse, it is empirically defensible. A song is an entity made up of melody, rhythm and (at least potentially) harmony in a particular disposition. This is different from a rhyme, in which only rhythm and the relative intonation of words matter. In my experience, rhymes are usually tale-specific whereas songs tend to migrate from one tale to another.

Seven interludes are heard in the course of Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's performance, taking up a total of fifty-four lines of text, roughly a seventh of the length of the story:

Interlude 1, lines 31–34
Interlude 2, lines 78–93
Interlude 3, lines 130–134
Interlude 4, lines 183–86
Interlude 5, lines 204–211
Interlude 6, lines 236–245, and
Interlude 7, lines 265–72

Measuring by the number of lines between any two interludes, we have the following sequence of numbers: 45, 38, 50, 19, 26, 21. From this we can deduce – in a rough way – something of the "structural rhythm" of the tale. The first three interludes are sung at roughly comparable distances apart (45, 38, and 50 lines respectively). Then, as the story approaches the denouement, interludes come at closer intervals, almost twice the rate of the first three interludes: 19, 26, and 21 lines apart. We may thus record an overall shift from a slower to a faster macro-rhythm.

Of the seven interludes, six (1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) are songs, and one (2) is a rhyme. Let us consider each interlude briefly.



Example 6.1. Interlude 1

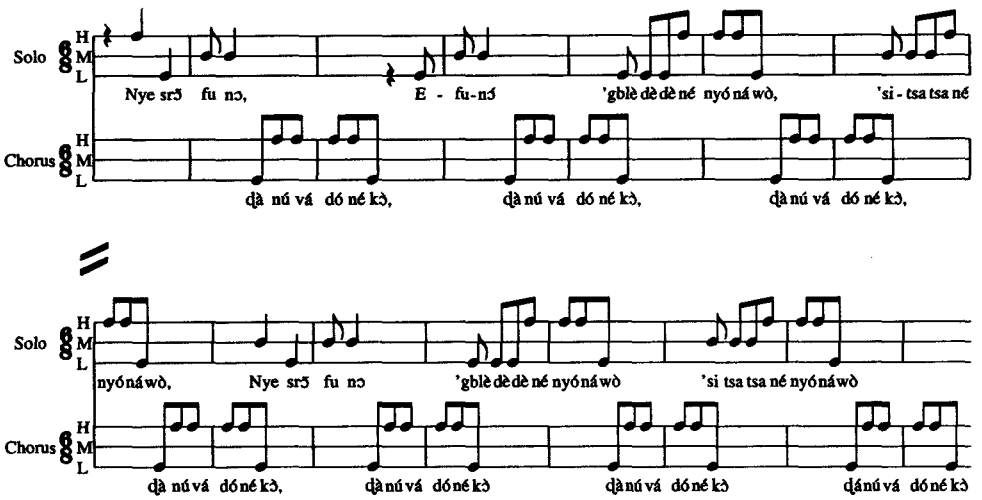
Interlude 1, lines 31–34 (Example 6.1). The context of this interlude, which is sung fairly early on in the story, is the day on which the childless woman feels her affliction particularly acutely. Introduced by the narrator herself, the song tells us to "bathe in preparation for life's events." Although it is appropriate to this moment in the story, the interlude is not invariant to this particular tale. It may be used wherever need and resolve to prepare for the future are thematized.

Musically, the interlude consists of four four-bar phrases. The first three have identical words and rhythm, but different pitches. Their terminal pitches (B, A, G) express the familiar Northern Ewe descending contour. In the final phrase, a poetic reversal is effected, the melody descending to E. Everything about the interlude's surface rhythm is regular, except for the syncopation in the second bar of each phrase, to which we have previously drawn attention as a recurring figure in Northern Ewe music.

Gbòlò Kɔ́súa sings the first line of the interlude, then the audience joins in at the second, some singing the melody an octave lower, others attempting to harmonize in parallel thirds. Some of the participants do not know the song, or at least do not know it well, but this does not stop them from elbowing their way through it. There is nothing unusual about this process of learning during performance: for semi-professional or non-professional groups, a performance frequently doubles as a rehearsal.

Interlude 2, lines 78–93 (Example 6.2). This rhyme is introduced in the wake of the rejoicing by man and wife, after the child is first discovered. Gbòlò Kɔ́súa at line 74 says and repeats the fact that the parents were "looking at the child." Then, a female member of the audience interrupts with the claim that she was present at the scene in which the child was being turned around. Gbòlò Kɔ́súa acknowledges that this woman might have had a better view of the events, so she relinquishes the narrative role to her. Cast in standard Call–Response form, the text of the rhyme wishes material prosperity for the new mother.

The explicit metrical structure of this spoken rhyme presents a contrast to the rhythms of narration. It is almost as if the "background" regularity and periodicity of the narrative thus far are focused intensely for one short moment. In a vigorous 6/8 time, both the fixed Response and the variable Call exploit off-beat rhythm, giving the rhyme as a whole a strong sense of forward movement.



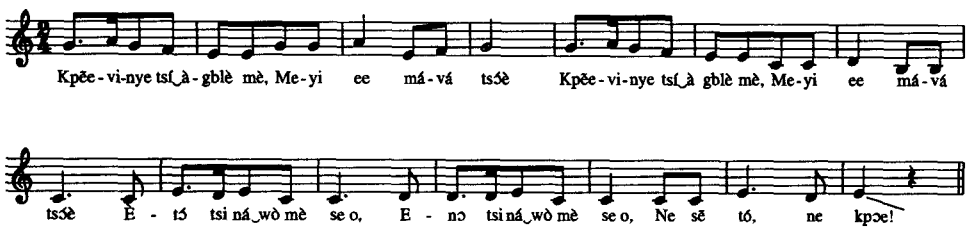
Example 6.2. Interlude 2

After the rhyme has been performed, one of the women tells Gbòlò Kɔ́súa to "go on." This is a formal signal to resume the verbal narration. It is like passing the baton back to Gbòlò Kɔ́súa. Sometimes a narrator is told after an interlude, "Look your way." The idea is that the interlude constitutes something of a derailing, a temporary departure from the main path.

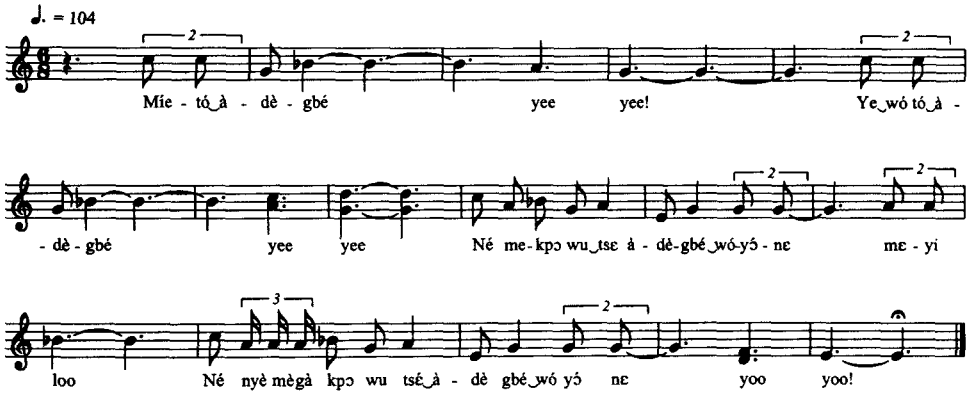
Interlude 3, lines 125–34 (Example 6.3). This interlude was introduced by a male member of the audience with the phrase "Égbemí mele étefé" ("That day I am there"). The interesting feature of this phrase stems from the "wrong" mixture of present and past tenses. Ordinarily, we would say, "menɔ étefé gbèmágbè" meaning "I was there that day" not "mele éte fé gbèmágbè" which translates as "I am there that day." But this, of course, is not an "ordinary" context. In spite of its ungrammaticality, the conjunction of tenses forcefully conveys the sense that, although the event took place in the past, it is being recreated now. What better way to convey this sense of immediate relevance than to collapse and integrate two otherwise distinct, though contiguous, tenses?

The interruption at line 125 puts a male participant in the temporary role of narrator. His interpolation need not have been as long as it was, however. Perhaps he was trying to usurp the spotlight, which had been for too long on Gbòlò Kɔ́súa. So, the ethos of folktale performance is not merely communal, it is also competitive. When the interlude is over, Gbòlò Kɔ́súa assures the man in the words, "Exactly, you are there," thus reinforcing both the relevance of the song's message to that particular moment in the tale (lines 136–38) and the significance of interpolation.

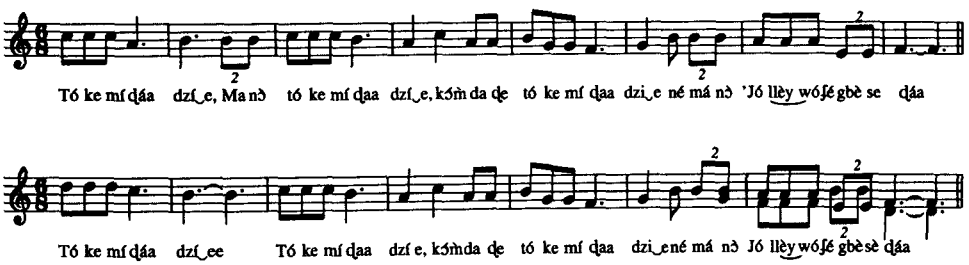
Interlude 3 is structurally simple, dividing into two four-bar phrases followed by three two-bar ones (4+4+2+2+2). The first and second of the two-bar phrases



Example 6.3. Interlude 3



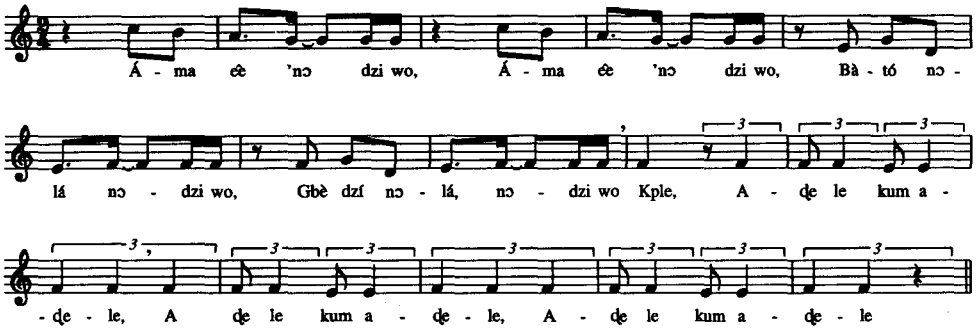
Example 6.4. Interlude 4



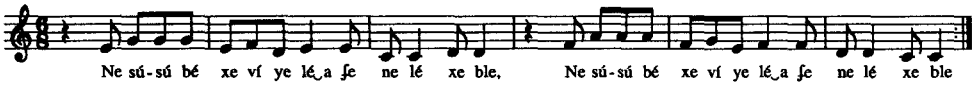
Example 6.5. Interlude 5

are closed, while the third terminates in an unpitched (i.e. spoken) "ne kpɔe" ("serves you right"). Note how the song's two parts are underlined by a shift in narrative voice. The first is that of the child, who says that his little flute was left behind on the farm and that he wishes to retrieve it (bars 1–8). The second is that of a moral majority, which admonishes him for not listening to his father or mother, but "hardening his ears" instead (bars 8–14). "It serves you right!" they shout at him.

At first glance, this interlude seems to fit the context like a glove, but some aspects of its message are dissonant with that of the tale. We do not know – although this may only be a feature of Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's narration – that the parents protested the child's return to the forest to search for his flute. This version



Example 6.6. Interlude 6



Example 6.7. Interlude 7

of the story in fact implies that it is the parents who are at fault for not reentering the forest with their child. It seems strange, then, to admonish the child instead of the parents. In any case, the lost flute motif is not especially rare in the Northern Ewe folktale repertoire, so this interlude may well fit other contexts more snugly.[4]

Interlude 4, lines 183–86 (Example 6.4). Not every hunt is successful. Not every hunter brings home big game. And yet we always refer to every such expedition as a "hunt." This interlude, a traditional hunters' song incorporated into Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's performance, teaches the obvious truth that success or failure are equally plausible outcomes of any venture that we undertake. The couple in our story, having miraculously produced a child, now find that they have lost it to the forest. Like hunters, they are going in search of the child. And like hunters, they are preparing themselves both to find and not to find the child.

Like Interlude 1 (and also 5 to follow), Interlude 4 is made up of four phrases arranged in contiguous pairs: 1–2 and 3–4. Phrase 2 repeats Phrase 1 while Phrase 4 modifies the melodic tendency at the close of Phrase 3 in order to produce the song's overall cadence. One tiny detail in this song further supports a point made in Chapter 3 about purely musical thinking among the Northern Ewe, thinking that is unconstrained by speech-tone patterns. Phrase 4 begins in the same way as Phrase 3 but uses different words. The somewhat clumsy and makeshift way in which the seven syllables of "Né nyemega kpɔ́ wu tsé" (bar 13) are forced into the temporal frame of bar 9 suggests that these particular words are being fitted to a pre-existing tune. The strength of this strophic impulse cannot be underestimated when listening to Northern Ewe song.

Interlude 5, lines 204–11 (Example 6.5). This interlude marks an anticipated happy moment. On hearing that the rat had gone off to have his teeth sharpened, a female participant interrupts the narration to say that she actually witnessed the event. She then puts herself in rat's shoes, imagining the pleasure of eating meat and chewing bones: put me on top of that hill so that I can hear the voices of my girlfriends. Although couched in metaphor, there is nothing obscure about this way of expressing her sentiments. The rat's behavior reminds one of another aspect of Northern Ewe ethos: those who least expect it tend to indulge most fully and completely in the enjoyment of high places.

Like Interlude 1, Interlude 5 contains four phrases held together by a stepwise pitch descent. The first three phrases have the same words while the revelatory fourth has different words. A gentle 6/8 regulates this utterance, which consists of stops and starts, groups of quavers rushing into dotted crotchets, the pattern repeated several times until in the final phrase the motion is continuous to the final cadence. At the end of the interlude, Gbòlò Kɔ́súa acknowledges that the woman who interrupted her actually did hear the voice of the rat hearing the voice of his loved ones. Then she presses on with her narrative.

Interlude 6, lines 236–45 (Example 6.6). The music of this interlude is in two parts. Part 1 is marked by the distinctive Northern Ewe syncopation in alternate bars, beginning with the second. Part 2 is given over to something in the nature of a rhyme. The words seem to be mostly vocables, allowing the composer to cultivate different groupings of triplet rhythms. The apparent disjunction between Parts 1 and 2 is caused by the conjunction of song (Part 1) with rhyme (Part 2).

Interlude 7, lines 265–72 (Example 6.7). The child's escape from his captors gives rise to some teasing within the animal kingdom. Even superficial acquaintance with Northern Ewe culture will be enough to show how rampant teasing is. It is not only children but adults who indulge in this practice. Here, a male participant interrupts to make fun of the animal guards: you thought you had caught a bird; you only caught its tail. With characteristic and unsparing sarcasm, the animals are made aware of how seriously they have miscalculated.

Musically, Interlude 7 is set syllabically, and this confers on it something of the character of speech. This impression is enhanced by the close connection between speech tone and melodic contour. However, a hidden 6/8 meter may also be felt.

These seven interludes, then, focus some of themes of the story as well as some of the "music" that is latent in this manifestation of spoken Ewe. Gbòlò Kɔ́súa is, of course, a narrator with great musical sensibility, and it is not at all surprising that she consistently makes the Ewe language "sing." In the many long and colorful vowels used, the exclamations introduced by the audience, the tempo changes at important turning-points, and the underlying sense of

periodicity within which the tale is told, we hear the formalized or consolidated music of language in the interludes.

The Moral. The moral is the moment in which some application of the tale is made to contemporary situations. A "moral" may explain behavior, demonstrate origins, or justify societal constraints. The Northern Ewe repertoire includes stories about the following: why we eat three times a day; why the frog seems to have an object permanently lodged in its throat (it swallowed a ladle!); why there are bad boys and girls in the world; why the tortoise has scales on its shell; why husbands do not buy cows for their pregnant wives anymore; why the tortoise is bald; why the spider hides in corners; why we must not listen to our parents when it comes to choosing a marriage partner; and why baby boys are more valuable than baby girls. The craft and ingenuity of the narrator will determine the particular transfer of the moral to the contemporary situation.

Although, by the end, there is no question about what Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's story seeks to explain, it is worth noting a major structural shift roughly midway through the tale. At the beginning, we are confronted with childlessness – a condition that many Northern Ewe women understand, not necessarily from personal experience, but through empathy. By the end of the story, however, the plight of the childless couple has all but disappeared, and we are left to deal with an aspect of animal life: why the butterfly flaps its wings gently and gracefully; why the bush rat darts in jerky spurts in the forest; and why the dove never climbs trees. Could it be that Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's tale is a conflation of two existing "proto-tales"?

The main temporal feature of the moral is that, because of its didactic function, it proceeds a shade slower than the rest of the tale. Gbòlò Kɔ́súa speaks slowly and deliberately. She takes full advantage of the image of slowness built into the butterfly's wing action, and contrasts this with the speed of the bush rat's movements.

The Closing Formula. It is usual for the folktale to end with the claim that the story just told was obtained from "an old woman down the road who told me to come and *deceive* you people with it." The poetic dimension of the performance is restored in this final acknowledgment that we are being deliberately "deceived." There are two sides to this deception. On the one hand, we are being deceived because we need the forum of art (or recreation) to imagine, and indeed fantasize about, the world in all its complexity. We need the relative protection of art to say things that we would not normally say. In that sense, there is nothing deceptive about telling tales. If anything, it is the real world, with its constraints on discourse, that encourages deception. On the other hand, it is of course true that characters and themes in folktales appear unrealistic sometimes,

bearing little or no resemblance to what we know from lived experience. It is in this sense that we acknowledge that we have been deceived.

The foregoing commentary on Gbòlò Kɔ́súa's tale could not possibly hope to convey all of the dimensions of this lively performance. The reader is encouraged to listen to this performance many times, paying particular attention to the sound of the Ewe language. I believe that enough has been said to support our contention that the Northern Ewe folktale is the site of several forms and intensities of essentially rhythmic interactions. From the rhythm of words, to the tempo of sentences, from an assumed tactus or periodicity to the timing of interludes, and from the music of language to the music of song: these provide a focus for the celebration of one of the most important pastimes in Northern Ewe society.

7

Epilogue: representing African rhythm

Near the end of Chapter 1 a model of rhythmic expression was introduced. Designed to capture affinities between various forms of rhythmic expression, this model prescribed a set of more or less abstract generative relationships involving, sequentially, gesture, the spoken word, song, instrumental music, and dance or stylized gesture. (The model is reproduced as Figure 7.1.) Chapters 2–6 should have provided a more secure basis for discussing the explanatory value of the model for Northern Ewe materials. What determines the range of rhythmic phenomena that the model explains? Are there any such phenomena that lie outside the model's explanatory domain? What are the bases for affinity? Are all relationships of a generative sort, or do some assume the profile of family resemblances? How do non-contiguous domains relate to one another? At what points should we incorporate left-pointing arrows?

This concluding chapter has two purposes: first, to revisit, for the last time, the model from Chapter 1 and to refine the discussion of its limitations; and second, to consider some of the technical problems involved in representing African rhythm, drawing on the work of A. M. Jones. The first aim, far from promising a conflict-free model, and far from guaranteeing a mathematically elegant explanation of the diverse behaviors that constitute "rhythm," provides at best a sharper definition of the theoretical issues. And the second aim, far from serving to justify the approach taken in this book, is designed to facilitate an assessment of its limitations.

A model revisited

From spoken word (2) to song (3): Ewe words, as we have seen, have a latent musicality stemming from the twin attributes of tone and rhythm. In speech or performed language, that which is latent approaches, without necessarily

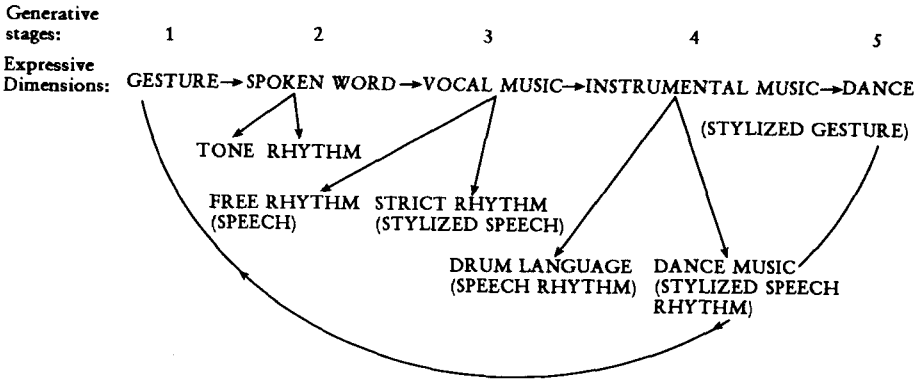
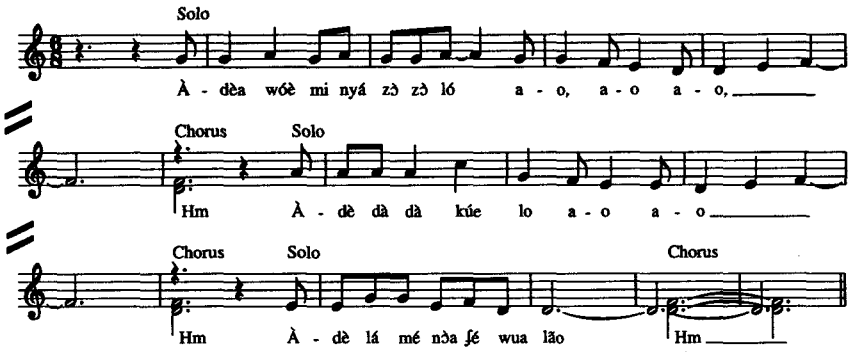


Figure 7.1. The domain of rhythmic expression (reproduced from chapter 1)

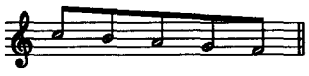
attaining, the condition of the patent. This interstice between language and music, although it can conceptually be smoothed over in certain contexts, is not ultimately eliminable. Thus, while the semantic fields of words like *núfofo* (beating of the mouth, or simply talking) and *hàdzìdzĭ* (singing of song, or simply singing) converge in the *gbè* (language) sub-domain of their respective fields (the word *gbèɖìɖì* means "the sounding of the voice" or "melody," while the expression *mìfò gbè mè* means "beat the inside of the voice" [as one beats a drum] or "sing well"), they are marked by distinct forms, registers, and modes of expression. The interesting thing about the language-as-music and music-as-language metaphors is to be found in this dynamic and unstable condition, the state of language striving to become music.

The state of becoming, language on its way to music, is well illustrated by the declamatory or recitative sections (*hàtsíatsía* or *hàtsíkátsíká*) of dances such as Àdèʋú, Gbòlò, and Égbanégbà. Here one senses a near-concretization of the music of language, not only in the declamation itself but – and especially – in the intermittent, "purely musical" response to the lead singer's narration. Example 7.1 is Anthony Adanua's transcription of a fragment from a performance of *Àdèʋú* in Ve.[1] The unanimous "agreements" ("hmm") to the narrator's narrative interrupt the asymmetries of speech with a promise of the symmetries of music. But this is no more than a promise, an on-its-way gesture.

Song proper is set off from performed language by virtue of its explicit, usually externalized meter. While performed language has rhythm, it develops a metrical feel only as a recognizable departure from its normal mode of existence. Thus, when Gbòlò Kɔ́súa performs a folktale, her narrative, although broadly periodic, is not metrical, except in the few instances in which the metrical feel is being exploited for heightened rhetorical effect. So, even if we are able to draw somewhat firm circles around the domains of "language" and "music," we still have to contend with similarities and resonances between their respective make-ups, as well as with the metalinguistic habit of "speaking" songs.



Example 7.1. *Àdèʋú* song (transcribed by Anthony Adanua)



Example 7.2. Northern Ewe melodic archetype or "background"

The idea that spoken language generates song, an idea expressed by a right-pointing arrow in the model, is undermined by the existence of musical archetypes or deep structures that allow singer-composers to improvise songs. The most important Northern Ewe melodic archetype is a descending line (Example 7.2), which is brought to life by means of various metrical, rhythmic, motivic, and linguistic processes. To call it an archetype or deep structure is to say that it is structurally prior to the specific surfaces that it subtends. It is, in other words, an *originary* musical element, a "primordial song" belonging on a sort of "zero level" of conceptualization. The archetype is not verbal but musical, and it is in this sense that the right-pointing arrow misleads. We may speak, not of song generating the spoken word – although song frequently *elicits* speech acts – but of one type of song generating another. Here, then, is another argument for musical autonomy, an argument for the self-sufficiency of purely musical processes.

Are archetypes "translations" of structures from other artistic or experiential domains? There seem to be two possibilities here, one speculative, the other less so. I have elsewhere speculated that the descending deep structure is analogous to an overwhelming "earth"-orientation (as opposed to "heaven"-orientation) in Northern Ewe culture.[2] Bending at the waist, pouring libation, looking towards the ground, squatting, and moving the feet rather than, say, the arms: these and many other forms of expression define a constant renewal of allegiance to the earth as the source of life. The main problem with the "translation" argument is that there is little in the way of indigenous conceptualization of stepwise descents in music to support a reading, however metaphorical, of Example 7.2 as "earth-oriented." While height and depth register in Northern Ewe discourse about music, analogies between falling melodies and the pull of gravity are, as far as I can tell, non-existent. We cannot therefore be sure that, on this conceptual level,

gesture is being "translated" into music; at best we might speak of a relationship by analogy, or perhaps admit that the purpose of such a conceptualization is not to capture a specific reality but to construct one for readers interested in such convergences. It is moreover obvious that archetypes are universal phenomena; the melodic structure of a great deal of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European music, for example, may be readily understood in reference to archetypal patterning.[3] While the European usages vary considerably in the degree of "depth," Northern Ewe usages are, for the most part, close to the surface; still, there is no doubting their similarity to European usages.

The less speculative argument for "translation" concerns a specific linguistic feature of Ewe and other tone languages, the so-called downdrift phenomenon.[4] According to this principle, the absolute distance between high and low tones at the beginning of an utterance gradually diminishes as the utterance unfolds. If we imagine a horizontal line representing the succession of low tones, then the first high tone and the last high tone of the utterance will be connected by a terraced descending contour above the horizontal base. Transposing this into a musical context, we may say that the upper shape is what is being reproduced in the melodic descent of song. The relationship is less one of analogy than one of direct generation, for the sequence of speech tones is invariably controlled by downdrift. However, the downdrift argument, like the melodic archetypes argument, deals with a structural feature that is too much of a background phenomenon, too remote and "universal," to be able to explain the specifics of Northern Ewe practice. Since not everyone composes songs, we can be certain only of the "primordial song" argument, namely, that singers have in their memories some kind of representation like Example 7.2 which they then "compose out" using a variety of foreground resources. Nor is the pertinence of the downdrift phenomenon enhanced by the conflicts between speech tone and melody, conflicts which are more or less normative in the Northern Ewe repertoire.[5]

From the spoken word (2) to drum music (4). A cursory comparison of transcriptions of speech and transcriptions of drumming reveals striking similarities between the two domains. In at least one obvious sense, the spoken word generates the drummed word. I say "drummed word" in specific reference to the practice of talking drums, a practice in which drums basically reproduce the tonal patterns and rhythms of speech. Song plays no part in this generative process, which means that we need a supplementary right-pointing arrow that will link the non-contiguous domains 2 and 4 of our model. But the idea of a direct generation of drum music by the spoken word only deals with one aspect of the relationship between the two domains. Both rhythmic *figurae* (such as short–long, long–short, and short–short–short) and "pitch *figurae*" stemming from the pattern of speech tones (such as high–low–low, low–high–high and

low-high-mid) are found in each of the two domains, even where there is no obvious generative process: that is, where what is carried over from the spoken language excludes its semantic baggage. We may speak of family resemblances, or more loosely of affinities, allowing for other interpretations of the origins of *figurae* and non-*figurae*. Deferring to "family resemblances" or "affinities" might seem, at first sight, to indicate a retreat from the challenge of defining a precise generative relationship. On the contrary, such a move introduces a more fluid conception of relatedness that opens up critical opportunities for individuals to interpret or "read" instrumental music, for example, and to discover how it "speaks" to them, how it subtends discursive meanings. "He is not saying anything on the drums," a phrase sometimes heard in folk evaluations of performances, is not necessarily a reference to the absence of the speech mode of drumming; it may simply mean that the speaker does not find the particular performance "meaningful," a meaningfulness that does not come from the recovery of verbal meaning. Moreover, continuing efforts to discover a "linguistic system" in the use of drum mnemonics are bound to fail if they do not recognize that mnemonics, far from constituting a "closed" system, are in fact based on a mixed pattern of signification. In other words, while some mnemonics may be allied to speech – and then not always gracefully – others have no obvious verbal profile. Furthermore, because drumming, especially the drumming that forms the heart of the texture of Northern Ewe dances, relies so heavily on repetition, specifically the repetition of a small group of rhythmic patterns, its overall rhythmic profile has little structural potential to convey the discursive and polysemous nature of performed language.

The possibility of reversing the supplementary right-pointing arrow linking domain 2 to domain 4 resides on the level of metalanguage: drumming *elicits*, and in that sense generates, the spoken word. This possibility, of course, applies to each pairing of the spoken word with another domain, so it must be confined to the metalinguistic rather than the "linguistic" level. Still, the fact that a drummer, for example, relies in part on spontaneous expressions of approval, a kind of on-the-spot reception, suggests that drumming itself has a compound mode of existence, and that what appears to be an inessential process of textual supplementarity on one level is in fact essential to the integrity of that domain.

From vocal music (3) to drum music (4). This is probably the weakest link in the chain, for there is no obvious way in which song might be said to generate drum music. While the generative relationship between the spoken word and song represents a move in the direction of pitch specificity and metrical exactitude, a "domesticization" of purely musical resource, the conceptual move from vocal music to drum music represents a contraction of available values within the pitch spectrum. The drummer selects from the combined language and song universes

a handful of pitch and rhythmic patterns that will form the instrumental basis of dance music. The idea here is to facilitate play, the essence of instrumental art, not by increasing but by decreasing resources in order to enable concentration on the few essential terms. This is not to deny the existence of the play element in either the spoken language or more especially in song; it is merely to point to its more fundamental role in dance drumming. Within the 2–3–4 progression, which symbolizes a concretization of music's rhythmic fabric, the 2–4 connection is a more pertinent relationship than the 3–4. And aside from metalinguistic considerations, there is no question here of dance drumming generating song, except in the obvious and colloquial sense in which one is "moved to sing" on hearing a familiar rhythmic pattern.

From dance drumming (4) to dance or stylized gesture (5). Drumming invariably brings on movement, but although movement is normally externalized and more or less patterned, it may also be internalized, a feature of the imagination, not the body. Gestures may of course be enacted in response to stimuli other than drumming – certainly modes 2 and 3 of the model are just as likely to stimulate gesture – so there is no necessary privilege to the 4–5 connection. In other words, 2–5, 3–5, and 4–5 are comparably plausible progressions. The representation in the model would be improved if the non-contiguous 2–5 and 3–5 relations could be acknowledged.

In sum, while the model is helpful in orienting us to the main types and modes of Northern Ewe rhythmic expression, application on "lower" levels must acknowledge that some of the arrows are reversible, and that there are relationships between non-contiguous elements. And although the model isolates domains for the sake of analysis, they are in practice rather intertwined. The practice of dance drumming, for example, rarely excludes song (which argues for the collapse of 3 and 4 on some level), while song is unimaginable without the spoken word as its generator and/or supplement, even where singing takes place "in the throat" (i.e. humming).

Representing African rhythm

It is possible now to restate the task of this book as an attempt to represent one particular network of African rhythmic expression, that of the Northern Ewe. The task of representation is of course faced by everyone who seeks to convey information about African music. Some have chosen to write, and to convey in vivid and suggestive language, the "feel" of African music (Chernoff has been particularly successful at this). Others prefer to use musical notation, either staff notation, which has a long history and therefore carries considerable conceptual baggage, and whose distinct advantage is to render the material immediately

comprehensible (Jones, Locke, Anku have been particularly successful at this), or radically new notational systems designed to minimize the interferences of the "Western" staff notation and to represent specific techniques of playing (Pantaleoni and Koetting have made contributions along these lines). None of these modes of representation – verbal or graphic – can hope to convey the musical experience in all its manifold detail. To some extent, therefore, choosing among them – including attempts to combine them – is perhaps ultimately a personal decision. Personal, but nevertheless motivated by a network of ideological and political factors that are no less pertinent for being unacknowledged.

Consider, for example, the apparently pragmatic question of using notation: does the researcher use "Western" staff notation, and in the process risk falsifying some basic characteristics of African rhythm, or does he or she invent a "new" notation for this "unique" repertoire? It would have been nice if the intellectual heritage of the Northern Ewe had included an indigenous system of musical notation; then we might have claimed, without hesitation, that their way of representing their own music should be privileged over other, non-Ewe and especially "Western" ways. Unfortunately, no indigenous system of musical notation survives among the Northern Ewe. Their traditional music is composed and learned orally (which, of course, means aurally, too) and although this presents no obvious problems to bearers of the tradition, it presents formidable problems to researchers wishing not only to describe what the Northern Ewe do and how they do it, but to prescribe a set of actions for those who might wish to replicate the Northern Ewe procedures.

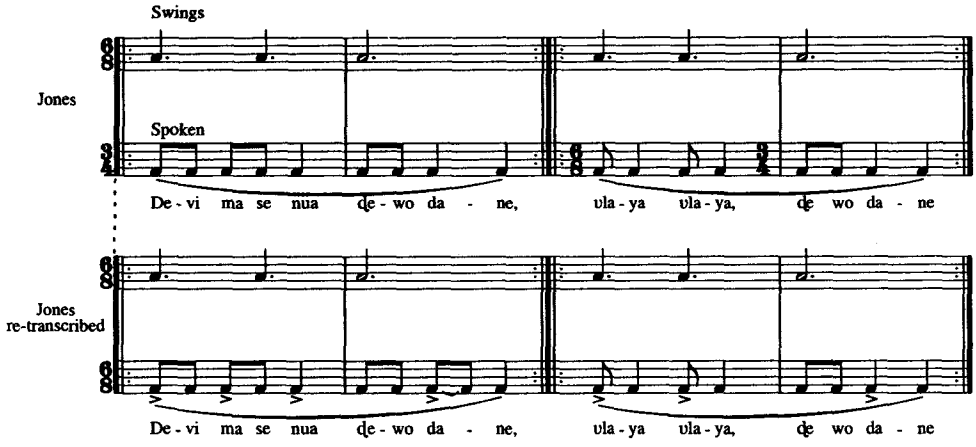
Writers on African music are, of course, not the only ones who have to choose appropriate modes of representation. Philosophers, creative writers, language planners, anthropologists, and others have wrestled with the implications of using colonial languages. Although no one would now wish to claim that French and English accurately portray African realities, few would wish to leave uninterrogated the often mystifying or mystified notion of an "African reality." Fewer still would insist that colonial languages belong exclusively to the West, especially since these languages have been used continuously in Africa for several centuries, and have been used adequately, if not in superior ways, by African writers. (By writers I do not mean only those who contribute to the "African Writers' Series"; I include authors of technical material as well.)

It is roughly the same with staff notation. Surely both staff notation and tonic solfa are so widely used by literate or semi-literate African musicians that, despite their manifestly "foreign" origins, they can no longer be dismissed as inauthentic ways of representing musical relations. Not everyone will agree that African musicians, and especially scholars of African music, can claim the music-intellectual heritage represented by staff notation and tonic solfa as their own. Among dissenters are likely to be those who seek a more essentially "African"

heritage. Yet, the idea that only indigenous African notational systems – if we should ever discover or invent them – can adequately represent African music must be fiercely resisted, and not only on ideological grounds. Suzanne Langer's claim that "it is . . . a mistake to symbolize things by entities too much like themselves"[6] may not convince those who subscribe to notions of African musical essences that staff notation is perfectly adequate for representational purposes – which is not to say that it has no inadequacies. The debate about ways in which African music is to be represented would be far more productive if we abandoned the search for who owns which representational mode and focused on the *creativity* exercised by African musicians in domesticating, or otherwise appropriating, the most "alien" modes of representation.

There is, of course, something self-serving about the foregoing argument, for my own book is laced with transcriptions in staff notation of various Northern Ewe musics. But if one casts a backward glance at the history of representation of African rhythm, one is struck by the decidedly marginal role played by those who have sought to invent more adequate notations for African music. Even the prospect that new notations will allow users to sidestep some of the assumptions of a monolithic "Western practice" does not persuade practitioners to dump staff notation. Readers of Blacking's *Venda Children's Songs*, of Jones's *Studies in African Music*, of Nketia's *The Music of Africa*, of David Locke's *Drum Gahu*, and of Simha Arom's *African Polyphony and Polyrhythm* benefit immensely from the use, never merely orthodox, of staff notation not because their transcriptions are free from conceptual errors, but because they facilitate entry into the world of African musical art. Whatever differences there might be from Western practice are thus highlighted, while the no less significant similarities are made clear.

Ideological battles die hard, as we all know, and what has been argued here is unlikely to settle the issues raised by notating African rhythm. But there is one aspect of the discussion that may be viewed profitably outside the explicit purview of ideology. This concerns the apparent rigidities of Western staff notation. The idea that notes are "fixed" on the staff, and that this somehow distorts the flexible African practice of sliding between notes (or of singing quarter tones, for example) is undermined by the fact that within Western practice itself, in particular in the string and vocal repertoires of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the note as represented and the note as heard are invariably different. One hears a similar argument about the use of time signatures such as 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, and 12/8. In order to undermine the validity of Western conventions of meter in application to African materials, two assumptions are often made, both dubious. One is that there is a fixed hierarchy of beats in each bar; the other is that successive downbeats have comparable accentual strength as beginnings of groups. Although it adequately conveys an abstract conception of meter, the



Example 7.3. Jones's transcriptions of children's play song, "Devi mase nua," with an alternative

"fixed hierarchy" argument can hardly prescribe that a performer treat, or a listener understand, successive downbeats as equally strong, especially where other musical processes, notably harmonic ones, intervene to produce a sense of periodicity, a "phrase discourse" that stems from meter's ability to convey qualitative distinctions across the bar line. This argument further overlooks the fact that, in many post-tonal contexts, meter serves only as a grouping mechanism without an *a priori* hierarchy of accents. (One thinks, for example, of the metrical structure of the *Rite of Spring*, and wonders how far an analyst will get if armed with a rigid schema in which beats are ordered according to a predetermined pattern of relative accentual strength.) Is it possible that opponents of the use of staff notation have (deliberately) oversimplified "Western practice" in order to construct a "different" Africa?

These questions cannot be answered in the abstract. So let me, in closing, return to the work of A. M. Jones, specifically to three brief transcriptions of Ewe children's play songs, in order, first, to reiterate certain basic principles in the organization and representation of Northern Ewe/African rhythm (for which purposes the regional differences between Jones's Southern Ewe and my Northern Ewe may be regarded as negligible), and second, to address some obvious limitations in Jones's approach while at the same time acknowledging the continuing relevance of his work, by now some four decades old.

1. Jones begins his study of African rhythm by transcribing a number of children's play songs and fishing songs because, in them, he hopes to find the "characteristic African traits occurring in their simplest form."[7] This particular song, described as a lullaby, is performed by two adults holding a child, one at the foot, the other at the head, and swinging him from side to side while speaking the rhyme shown in Example 7.3.

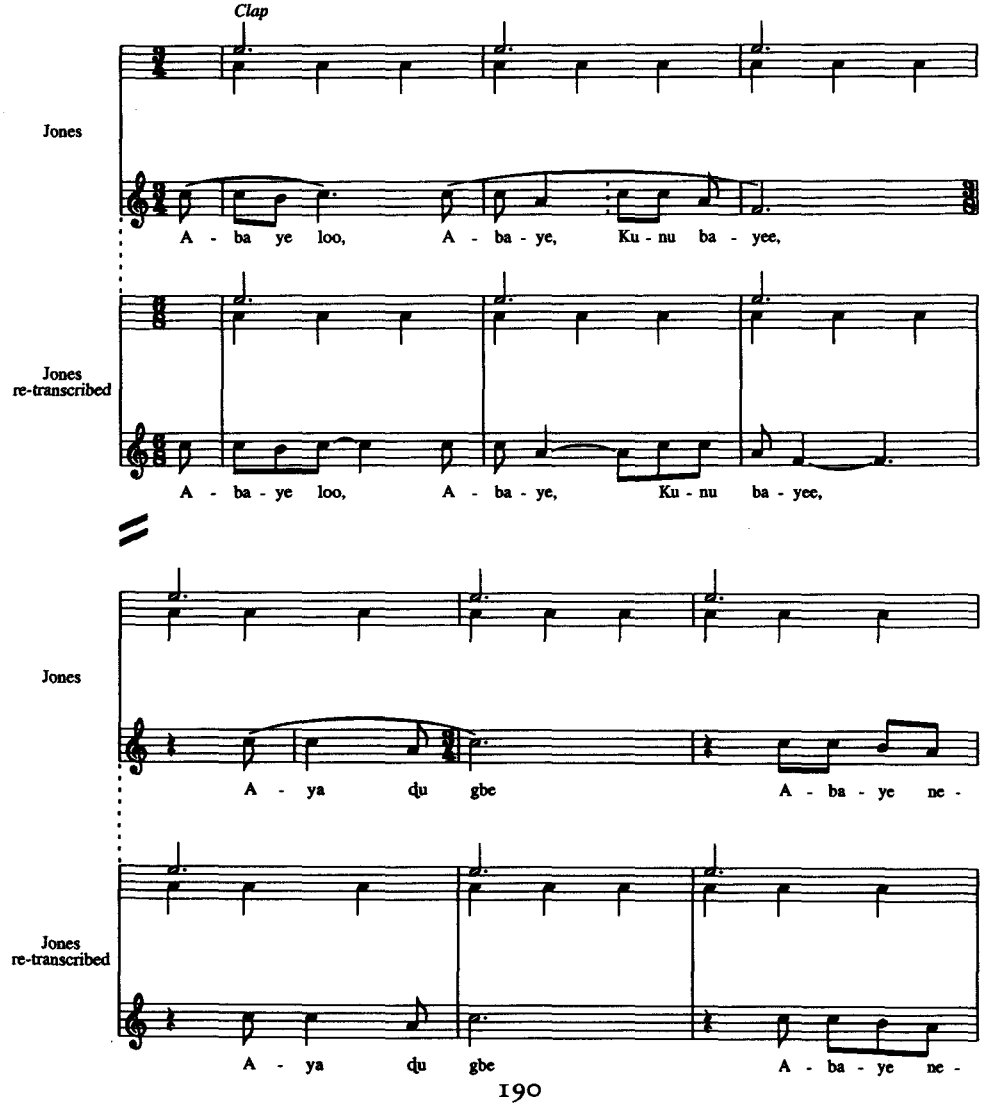
The metrical background to this song, as with many other Ewe songs, is a clear *duple* time. This background is articulated by the swinging motion, here replacing the regular hand claps. The rhyme may therefore be transcribed in 6/8 or 2/4, but not in 3/4. Unless this simple metrical background is grasped, the listener is subject to the vagaries of the foreground. The situation is analogous to that of European tonal music, some of whose rich and unstable foregrounds hide a simpler, stable background. Heinrich Schenker addressed this issue in language that is relevant to the question of metrical backgrounds in Northern Ewe music:

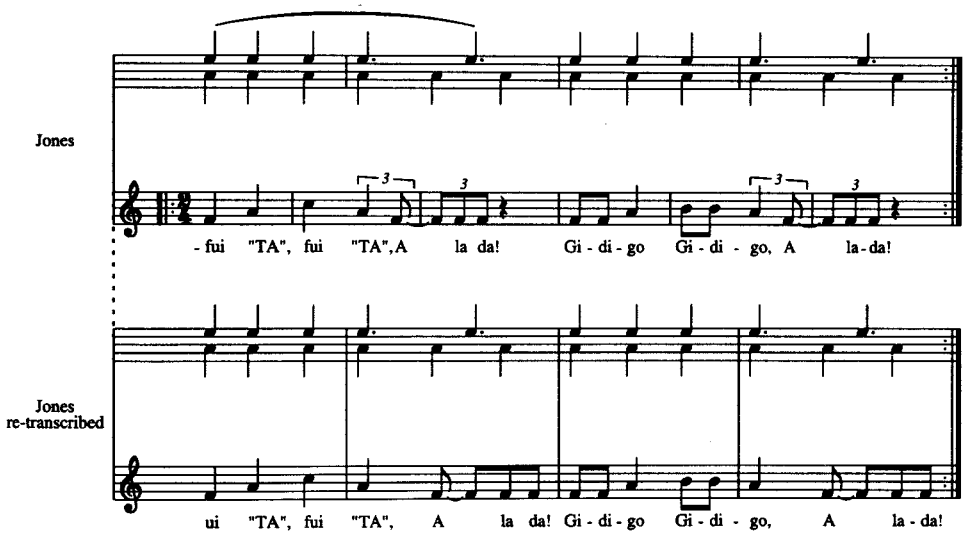
> A composition presents itself to the observer or performer as foreground. This foreground is, so to speak, only its "present" [*Gegenwart*], taking the dictionary sense of the word. We know how difficult it is to grasp the meaning of the present if we are not aware of the temporal background. It is equally difficult for the student or performer to grasp the "present" of a composition if he does not include at the same time a knowledge of the background. Just as the demands of the day toss him to and fro, so does the foreground of a composition pull at him. Every change of sound and of figuration, every chromatic shift, every neighbor note signifies something new to him. Each novelty leads him further away from the coherence which derives from the background.[8]

Failure to perceive and preserve the interdependent regularities of beat and grouping led some earlier researchers, such as Rose Brandel, to assume a changing musical background. Their transcriptions consequently consist of a series of "metrical modulations" that convey the impression that African music uses mostly additive rather than divisive meter, an impression that then confirms the complexity of this music, a complexity in turn necessary to the construction of its difference, its "exotic" status. In Northern Ewe music there are, of course, additive processes on local levels, but beyond that meter is divisive, not additive.

The key to the rhythmic structure of Example 7.3 is a familiar cross-rhythm, a 2-against-3 effect, which gives the rhyme a buoyant, dynamic, forward-moving feel. To speak of 2 against 3 might encourage the view that duple or triple meter is adequate for transcribing this rhyme. Jones in fact combines simple triple (3/4) with compound duple (6/8). But the situation is emphatically *not* undecidable: 2 and 3, far from being equally plausible alternatives in the metrical realm, are formed into a hierarchy in which 2 serves a primary function while 3 serves an auxiliary but indispensable function. The swings here, equivalent to hand claps elsewhere, are felt in twos, which is not to deny the many triple *effects* that challenge and ultimately reinforce the basic duple feeling. Jones's 3/4–3/4–6/8–3/4 succession is, in these terms, wrong, and needs to be replaced by a single 6/8 at the beginning of the transcription.

To speak in terms of a duple structure that contains triple groupings on various levels, and to insist that, here as elsewhere, a simple metrical scheme exists, would seem to "under-complicate" African rhythm, "de-exoticize" it, perhaps. It might be argued, however, that the recognition of a hierarchy serves to complicate African rhythm in more believable terms. As we noted in Chapter 3, children, for example, enjoy playing with rhythms, and many of them internalize the 2-against-3 (or 3-within-2) effect from a fairly early age. In a popular rhyme like this, the foreground "instability" of 2-against-3 produces an on-going, "open" effect that is held in place by a stable background. If there is a Northern Ewe difference, it resides in their ability to test the limits of a stable background without relinquishing dependence on that background. It is interesting that the





Example 7.4. Jones's transcriptions of children's play song, "Abaye loo, abaye," with an alternative

most "stable" bar in Example 7.3, one in which swing accents are aligned with verbal accents, bar 3, occurs at the beginning rather than at the end of the second two-bar phrase. This reversal allows the cross- rhythm to continue to generate subsequent repetitions, repetitions that in turn facilitate the implementation of the rhyme's social function.

Of course the use of 6/8 meter throughout, and the assumption that 6/8 has two strong beats, one on the first quaver and the second on the fourth, slightly distort the meaning of this rhyme. There is, in fact, no necessary emphasis on either quaver beyond whatever stress exists in the words themselves. And without some indication of word stress in the transcription, the reader cannot perform this rhyme accurately (Ewe speakers do not, of course, need this supplementary information). One has to be careful, however, not to exaggerate the word stresses shown in the alternative transcription, although to mark them for attention will most certainly produce a more "authentic" performance than following Jones's shifting bar lines. What all this suggests, then, is a richness of foreground rhythmic effects, a multiplicity of competing accents, which are always held in check by a simple, regular background.

2. Jones's transcription of this well-known children's clapping game (Example 7.4) is meant to convey a multiplicity of accents in clap and melody. We will comment first on the clap pattern and second on the melody.

By his own account, Jones could not find a clue to the metrical structure of the song in the first six bars (bar numbers refer to the fixed clap pattern transcribed on the uppermost stave), so he asked his informant, Mr. Desmond Tay, to sing the song again "us[ing] a quicker pulse."[9] This led Jones to the view

that the clap pattern is in 3/4, which is why an unchanging crotchet pulse is indicated in the score, although it is not externalized in performance. It is surprising, however, that Jones looked to the first rather than to the second half of the song to determine its basic metrical feel, for in the second half, we hear a typical "linear cross-rhythm" or hemiola, an alternation of sub-groups of 3 and 2 in bars 7–8 and 9–10, phrased in such a way that each second bar resolves the tension generated in the first. This, surely, is the key to the song's metrical structure, which allows it to be transcribed in 6/8 or 2/4 for the same reasons given in connection with the previous game song. It seems to me more than likely, although the point cannot ultimately be verified, that Mr. Tay, while obeying Jones's instructions, implemented a 3/4 against a silently performed, or simply assumed, but nevertheless felt duple background clap. In other words, Mr. Tay's 3/4 is inconceivable apart from a simultaneously unfolding, fully aligned 6/8. We might go even further in calling 3/4 a dependent meter, a feature of the foreground rather than of the background.

The second factor influencing Jones's transcription is word stress. One applauds Jones's effort to take word stress into account in making his transcriptions, an all-too-rare feature of transcriptions of African music. Unfortunately, however, Jones's key assumption, namely that word stress must coincide with metrical stress, is wrong.[10] Had he allowed word stress to emerge from the singer's articulation within the regular meter, the result would have been truer to practice, for it would have produced a tension between an unstable foreground and a stable background. For example, the word *Àbáye*, which has a stress on the second syllable, is placed on "downbeats" (in bars 1 and 3 of the melodic line of Jones's transcription) in order, presumably, to guarantee its accentual superiority. (Only in bar 6 is Jones unable to align *-ba-* with a downbeat.) The result is an unduly fussy account of the play song's metrical structure. One need not oppose Jones's insistence on showing "how the African actually sings [the word *Àbáye*]"[11] in order to find the resulting transcription somewhat unwieldy.

Jones's error, in short, was to insist on a coincidence between metrical accent and word stress. If we give up this premise, adopt an unchanging background, and allow word stress to emerge from the performer's articulation, we have a transcription like the one given as an alternative in Example 7.4. It is somewhat paradoxical that Jones, who postulated "the clash and conflict of rhythms" as a cardinal principle of African rhythm, should have sought to eliminate such a "clash" in transcribing this play song. Within an unchanging 6/8 meter, stresses of various intensities are bound to emerge in performance, but the essential structure of the rhyme will not be compromised. Certainly, the idea that a children's play song begins in 3/4, goes to 3/8, returns to 3/4 and finishes in 2/4 appears rather fanciful – not even African children are capable of such feats!

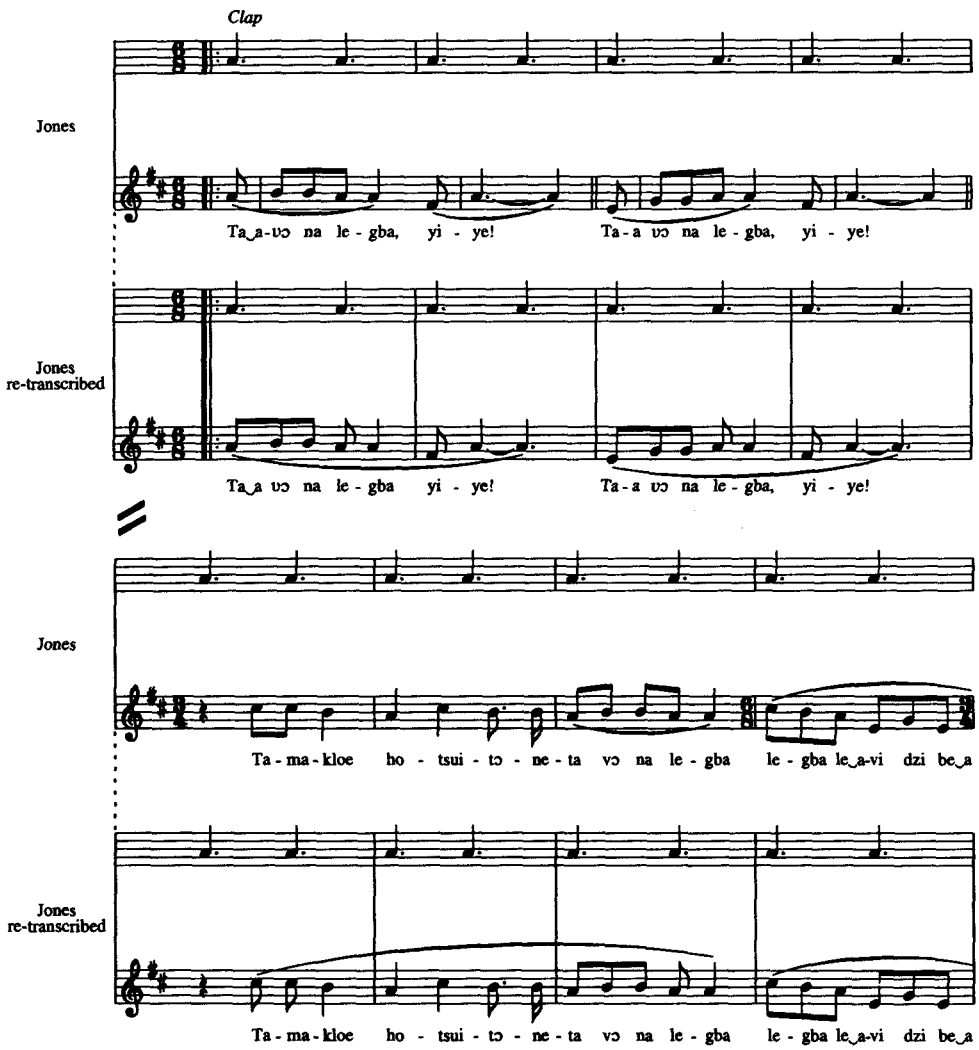
As mentioned earlier, any attempt to return African music to simple meters such as 2/4, 6/8, and 12/8 would seem to "normalize" what some would like to perceive as "abnormal." There is an obvious ideological dimension to this debate. If – to put words into the mouths of advocates of changing meters – Africans do nothing different from what we do in our folk songs, then the project of "exoticizing" them is dealt a severe blow. Enough has been said by now to suggest that such relentless pursuit of difference must be resisted, resisted because it is likely to blind us to those areas in which difference actually occurs. For difference is perceivable only against a horizon of non-difference, and until we have constructed such a horizon, our efforts to understand African rhythm will continue to founder.

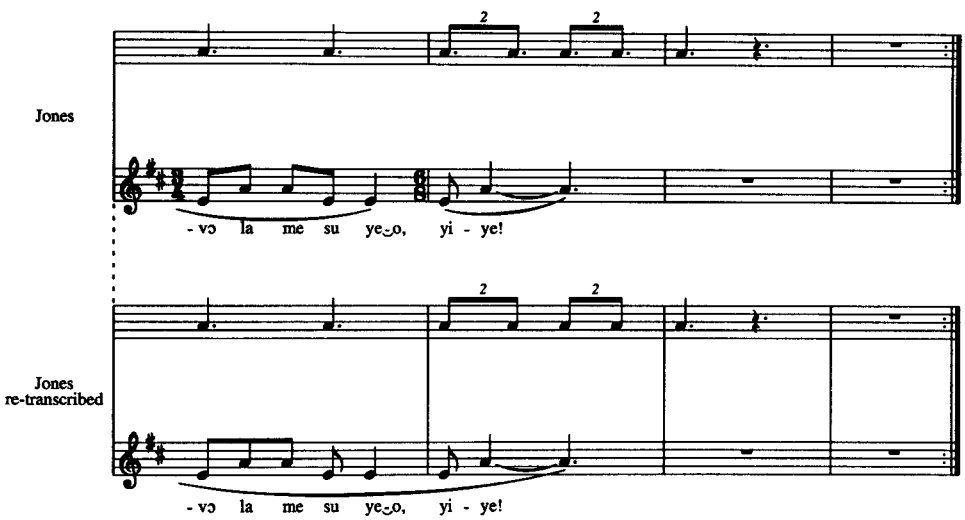
Jones's method of transcribing play songs was carried over into his transcriptions of purely instrumental music, transcriptions that form the main substance of his *Studies in African Music*. In them, Jones preferred simultaneous multiple meters to a single, overriding meter, his aim being to respect the accentual – which for him meant metrical – structure of individual instrumental parts. This wrong-headed strategy has been criticized by others, and indeed corrected in the transcriptions of scholars like Locke, Anku, and Pressing, so there is no need to flog a dead horse here.

3. Although Jones concludes his transcription of this play dance (Example 7.5) with the remark that "the whole song which at first sight appears to be irregular turns out to be a simple, consistent, and well-balanced piece of music,"[12] his transcription does not accurately convey the "simplicity" within which a greater complexity may be heard. According to him, the song "is in a mixture of 6/8 and 3/4 time." This is already misleading; it would be more accurate to acknowledge that hemiolas – or, if one must, momentary 3/4 effects – represent apparent departures from an unequivocal 6/8 meter. In the case of this example, there is at least one other published transcription made by Nissio Fiagbedzi (Example 7.6), which uses 6/8 throughout.[13] (I will forego comment on the differences in pitch and interval between Jones's and Fiagbedzi's transcriptions, noting only that, given the oral home of the song, and the fact that the two transcriptions were made roughly twenty years apart, the differences are likely to be tell-tale signs of the effects of memory and recall in transmission, and therefore that the song is, for all intents and purposes, the "same.") As before, Jones has been influenced by word stress. For example, because the syllable -*vɔ* bears the stress in the words *Tà àvɔ̀*, Jones insists on placing it on downbeats (he manages this in bars 1 and 3, but not in bar 7). But this, too, is unnecessary, for a good singer will convey word stress without undermining the underlying meter.

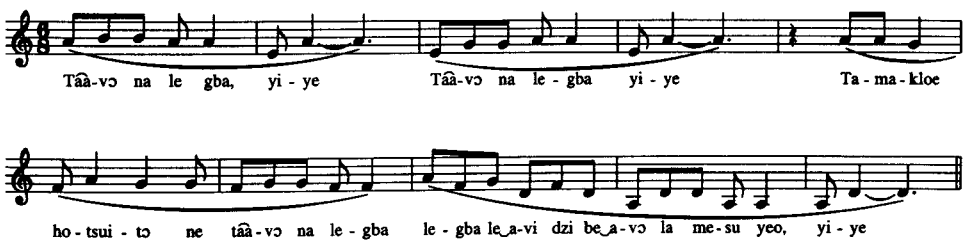
A great deal more could be said about Jones's transcriptions, but that will have to wait for another occasion. My aim has been to point to those aspects of his

practice most relevant to the concerns of this study, and to emphasize that practical as well as ideological issues inform our attempts to represent African rhythm. The history of this representation is yet to be written, but when it is, it will reveal some interesting aspects of practice and ideology. Hornbostel's and Kubik's psychologically influenced theories in which physical movement and tonal hierarchies play a central role; Nketia's and Rouget's continuing stress on the rhythms of language and their transformation in vocal as well as in instrumental music; Jones's illumination of various African idioms; Arom's tested cognitive theories about the Central African musical mind; Chernoff's sensitive portrayal of Ewe and especially Dagomba rhythmic sensibilities; and Locke's elegant transcriptions of Ewe and Dagomba drum musics: these and





Example 7.5. "Ta avɔ na legba", with an alternative



Example 7.6. Fiagbedzi's transcription of "Ta avɔ na legba"

many other studies, taken together, do not reveal a straightforward "linear" historical trajectory, but a complex progression in which institutional and personal concerns, as well as scholarly fashions, influence our methods of representation. By failing to make a case for a "unique" Northern Ewe sensibility in this book, and by implying that their songs share rhythmic and metrical features with other musical traditions, I hope to have demystified the Northern Ewe in order to return our view of their musical practices to a "normal" sphere, a sphere in which what is extraordinary about them can be better assessed. For what has been assembled here is not the work of professional musicians but of amateurs: normal, everyday people who make music in the course of work, play, and worship. It is this singular fact, namely, that the Northern Ewe rhythmic procedures studied here are part of the practice of *everyday musical life*, that should, I think, give us pause.

Notes

Prologue

1. Unlike their southern counterparts, who have attained prominence in the ethnomusicological literature as bearers of a rich heritage of drumming and dancing (see, among others, the writings of A. M. Jones, S. D. Cudjoe, Hewitt Pantaleoni, John Chernoff, David Locke, Nissio Fiagbedzi, Kofi Anyidoho, and Daniel Avorgbedor), the Northern Ewe are less well known. One reason for this is that the Northern Ewe region, being linguistically heterogenous (in addition to the dominant Ewe, this area houses a number of minority languages, the so-called Central-Togo languages: Adele, Buem, Siwu, Sele, Likpe, Logba, Animere, Kebu, Bowli, Avatime, and Nyangbo-Tafi), presents greater research problems than a single-language area. A comprehensive bibliography of the Ewe, listing 1281 items in English, French, Ewe, and German, is Krzysztof Zielnica, "Bibliographie der Ewe in Westafrika." This includes writings on history, religion, culture and languages. (I am grateful to Sandra Greene for drawing my attention to this bibliography.) Two less comprehensive bibliographical sources are E. Y. Amedekey, *The Culture of Ghana: A Bibliography* and John Gray, *African Music: A Bibliographical Guide to the Traditional, Popular, Art, and Liturgical Musics of Sub-Saharan Africa.* Although now superseded by other specialized research, Westermann's *The Languages of West Africa* provides a straightforward guide to language in this area of Ghana. The general reader is likely to benefit most from M. E. Kropp Dakubu's *The Languages of Ghana*, which includes chapters on Ewe (by A. S. Duthie) and on the Central-Togo languages (by Dakubu). See also Edward Hall, *Ghanaian Languages*, Hildegard Höftmann, *The Structure of Lelemi Language* and M. E. Kropp, *Lefana, Akpafu and Avatime with English Gloss.* Specialized accounts of the structure of Ewe, including a major study of phonology, may be found in the writings of Hounkpati C. Capo (see his *Comparative Phonology of Gbe* and *Renaissance*). (I should also note that some researchers have recently proposed that the so-called Central-Togo communities belong to the Guan-speaking communities spread across Ghana. See Kwamena-Poh, "Who are the Guan?" and Kwame Ampene, "Reflections on the Early History of the Guan." We await a fuller demonstration, especially on the linguistic front, of these affinities.) In the ethnographic area, an admirably concise, if by now dated, introduction to the Northern Ewe may be found in

Madeline Manoukian, *The Ewe-Speaking People of Togoland and the Gold Coast.* A specialized anthropological account of the structure of a typical Northern Ewe village – one, incidentally, that did not feature in my own research – is Michel Verdon, *The Abutia-Ewe of W. Africa.* Verdon has also published a valuable recording of Northern Ewe music, *Songs of War and Death from the Slave Coast.* For a socio-economic study of Northern Ewe women in the town of Tsito, see Jette Bukh, *The Village Woman in Ghana.* Most of the information currently available on Northern Ewe music is contained in unpublished dissertations, a number of them produced and housed at the University of Ghana, Legon. Those that I have had the opportunity of consulting are Esther Akosua Ofori, "*Egbanegba*: A Traditional Musical Type of Northern Eweland"; George Dor, "'The Alavanyo Orchestra': A Legacy of Europe on Indigenous Musical Cultures of Africa (A Case Study)"; Festus K. Asamoah, "Mourning Songs of Northern Eweland: A Study of the Music of Northern Ewe Women"; Lucas Isaac Togbede, "*Totoeme*: A Case Study of a Northern Ewe Recreational Musical Type"; Francis Agudze, "The Music of Tokpaikor Shrine in Akpafu: A Case Study of the Role of Tokpaikor Music in Akpafu Traditional Worship"; Rowland Senyo Brese, "*Avihawo*: A Study of Funeral Dirges of the Tafi People of Hohoe District"; Anthony Kwame Adanua, "*Adevu*: A Study of Ve Hunters' Music"; and W. I. C. Dowoeh, "The Music of Gbolo." Although these theses are not especially adventurous methodologically – Nketia's *The Music of Africa* seems to have left a permanent mark on the framing of each one of these works – they nevertheless constitute valuable sources of data on aspects of Northern Ewe musical life. Each includes background information as well as numerous transcriptions in staff notation of the particular musical type studied. More readily available (from UMI) is William Komla Amoaku's *Symbolism in Traditional Institutions and Music of the Ewe of Ghana*, which pursues a theory of symbolism in application to Northern Ewe materials. A comprehensive study of the dance *Bɔ̀bɔ́bɔ̀* may be found in Urban Bareis, "Formen neo-traditioneller Musik in Kpando, Ghana." Of particular relevance to the present study is E. Y. Egblewogbe's *Games and Songs as Education Media*, which includes song texts and a straightforward discussion of the significance of songs to the education of Northern Ewe children. Although there is no collection of Northern Ewe songs comparable to the Akan material assembled in Nketia's *Folk Songs of Ghana*, Atta Annan Mensah's *Folk Songs for Schools* includes four Northern Ewe *àvihawó* or mourning songs, while a third of the twelve items collected in Amoaku's *African Songs and Rhythms for Children* are Ewe items.

2. A study which pursues some of the intertextual resonances of musical vocabulary with particular reference to E. M. von Hornbostel's pioneering studies of African music is Stephen Blum, "European Musical Terminology and the Music of Africa." While a number of valuable studies of indigenous African conceptualizations of music and associated behavior have been published in the last couple of decades (see, for example, Hugo Zemp, *Musique Dan: La musique dans la pensée et la vie sociale d'une société africaine*; David W. Ames and Anthony V. King, *Glossary of Hausa Music and its Social Context*; Ruth M. Stone, *Let the Inside be Sweet: The Interpretation of Music Event among the Kpelle of Liberia*; Charles Keil, *Tiv Song: The Sociology of Art in a Classless Society*; and Lester P. Monts, *An Annotated Glossary of Vai Musical Language and its Social Contexts*), there is as yet no single, comprehensive cross-cultural study.
3. Wachsmann, "Music," p. 187.
4. Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, p. 75.

5. Locke, "Improvisation in West African Musics," p. 128.
6. Francis Bebey, *African Music: A People's Art*, p. 115.
7. The term "alloy" is Schoenberg's (see his *Structural Functions of Harmony*, p. 76), while "agonic" is used by Lawrence Kramer to describe the relationship between words and music (see his *Music and Poetry*, p. 127). Although it deals primarily with the German art song of the nineteenth century, the introductory section of my essay, "Theory and Practice in the Analysis of the Nineteenth-Century *Lied*," touches on some general theoretical problems raised by song analysis.
8. Bebey, *African Music*, p. 115.
9. Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, p. 33.
10. For a critique of the ideology of difference in representations of African music, see my "Representing African Music."
11. Paulin J. Hountondji, "Recapturing," p. 242.
12. Westerman, *Evefiala or Ewe–English Dictionary*.
13. One such musician is the composer R. K. Ndɔ, a retired school teacher who now lives in Ve. The discussion below owes much to a 1989 interview with Mr. Ndɔ as well as to conversations with Mr. Obed Kissiedu of the Centre for National Culture, Ho.

1 Rhythms of society

1. On the concept of "soundscape", see R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, "a pioneering exploration into the past history and present state of the most neglected aspect of our environment: the soundscape." For a recent study of a Papua New Guinean soundscape, framed as here by activities associated with various times of day, see Steven Feld, *Voices of the Rainforest* (CD with jacket notes).
2. On the Siwu language, see, in addition to Dakubu's chapter on Central-Togo languages in *The Languages of Ghana*, Robert K. Iddah's entry "Siwu" in *West African Language Data Sheets*.
3. For another discussion of "daily, weekly and monthly time rhythms" in a West African society, see Ruth Stone, *Dried Millet Breaking*, pp. 111–16.
4. See, for example, the volume *Zentralafrika*, edited by Jos Gansemans and Barbara Schmidt-Wrenger.
5. On repetition as a source of meaning in African music, see Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, pp. 55, 80–81, and Stone, *Dried Millet Beating*, *passim*. For its specifically musical adaptation, see Avorgbedor, "The Transmission, Preservation, and Realisation of Song Texts," pp. 68–75. Gilbert Rouget's "La répétition comme universel du langage musical. A propos d'un chant initiatique béninois" exemplifies a rigorous semiological method in which repetition determines the segmentation of the musical syntagm.
6. For a calendar that combines the seven-day week with the four-day week for the year 1986, see N.K. Dzobo, *Asigbe Xletigbale 1986*.
7. The theme of agriculture as performance informs a number of writings by Paul Richards. See, for example, his *Coping with Hunger: Hazard and Experiment in an African Rice Farming System* and "Comment on Jane Guyer's 'The Multiplication of Labor.'"
8. For a concise description of one Northern Ewe festival, see Ephraim Amu, "Yam Festival at Peki." See also A. A. Opoku, *Festivals of Ghana*, for descriptions of other festivals. Broader in scope still is Kwabena N. Bame, *Profiles in African Traditional Popular Culture*.

9. A fuller discussion of *agorɔ* may be found in Nketia's important essay, *The Play-Concept in African Music.*

2 Rhythms of language

1. The literature on the verbal arts or oral literature or orature in Africa is quite extensive, so I will mention only a handful of works that the non-specialist reader might find particularly helpful. Ruth Finnegan's *Oral Literature in Africa* raises many of the basic questions that have engaged subsequent students. A recent and comprehensive study is Isidore Okpewho, *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character, and Continuity.* Closer to home is Kofi Anyidoho's "Oral Poetics and the Traditions of Verbal Art in Africa," which includes a generous summary of the specialized literature for the general reader, an analytical focus on Southern Ewe traditions, and several references to the Northern Ewe.
2. John Blacking, "The Problem of 'Ethnic' Perceptions in the Semiotics of Music."
3. On tones in Ewe, see Gilbert Ansre, "The Tonal Structure of Ewe."
4. The relationship between speech tone and melody has, of course, attracted considerable attention in the literature on African vocal music. An early debate dealing with Southern Ewe music by two non-Ewe speakers pointed to some of the basic questions involved in the analysis of the phenomenon (see Marius Schneider, "Phonetische und metrische Korrelationen bei gesprochenen und gesungenen Ewe-Texten," Schneider, "Tone and Tune in West African Music," and Jones, *Studies in African Music*, pp. 230–51). These studies have been superseded by the rounded, and musically more sensitive, discussion in Nissio Fiagbedzi, *Religious Music Traditions in Africa.* A study that deals specifically with Northern Ewe music but engages with the conclusions reached in other regional studies is my "Tone and Tune: The Evidence for Northern Ewe Music."
5. For an accessible study of iconicity, including an argument for its apparently greater incidence in the English lexicon than has hitherto been acknowledged, see Linda Waugh, "Let's Take the Con out of Iconicity: Constraints on Iconicity in the Lexicon."
6. On phenomenal accents, see Fred Lerdahl and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, pp. 17–18. We shall return to phenomenal accents in Chapters 3 and 7.
7. But see Peter Cooke, "Ganda Xylophone Music: Another Approach," and Gilbert Rouget, "Tons de la langue en Gun (Dahomey) et tons du tambour."
8. A fuller discussion of Ewe traditions of greeting may be found in Egblewogbe, "Social and Psychological Aspects of Greeting Among the Ewes of West Africa."

3 Rhythms of song

1. Studies of Ewe religious and artistic expression often identify a strong communal ethos. See for example Anyidoho's discussion of "The Communal Ethos of Ewe Poetry" in "Oral Poetics and Traditions of Verbal Art in Africa," fols. 232–58, and Dzobo's "The Integrity of the Socio-Cultural Identity of Black Peoples."
2. By far the best study of African children's songs is John Blacking's *Venda Children's Songs*, which develops a rich method for the "cultural analysis" of African music. (It is a telling comment on the nature of the reception of academic work that the cogently argued and ethnographically grounded *Venda Children's Songs* seems to have had less of an impact than the more popular or populist *How Musical is Man?*) A number of Blacking's conclusions are echoed in my own discussion below. For the Northern Ewe area, see Egblewogbe, *Games and Songs as Education Media.* Also of interest are Mensah, *Folk Songs for Schools*, Adolphus Turkson, "Music and Games in Early African Childhood

Education"; D. A. Boateng, *Songs for Infant Schools*; and Kwasi Aduonum, "A Compilation, Analysis and Adaptation of Selected Ghanaian Folktale Songs."

3. This point is made especially well by David Locke in his *Drum Gahu*. See also his earlier study, "Principles of Offbeat Timing and Cross-Rhythm in Southern Ewe Dance Drumming." It was a failure to grasp the full implications of this important phenomenon that resulted in some of Jones's errors of transcription in *Studies in African Music* (some of these errors are specified in Chapter 7). The concepts of "downbeat" and "upbeat" call for some clarification in application to the Northern Ewe repertoire. In European tonal theory, it is usual to think of meter as a grouping mechanism (number of beats in a bar) that also carries a normatively fixed hierarchy of accents (1–3–2–4 in 4/4 time, for example). This view, however, depends fundamentally on a real or imagined tonal-harmonic dimension, a dimension that is not readily identifiable in the Northern Ewe repertoire – which is not to say that Northern Ewe songs do not have their own patterns of melodic or harmonic accentuation. Time signatures used in transcriptions should therefore be understood in the restricted sense that they indicate primarily grouping, not necessarily accentual hierarchy. In imagining performances of this and other transcriptions, readers are urged to resist the temptation to accent every first beat of the bar mechanically. None of this is to imply that Northern Ewe songs are devoid of accents stemming from grouping, however. Some readers might prefer to dispense with time signatures and bar lines altogether, and represent African music as chains of notes which the reader or listener is invited to group in a way that makes sense to him or her. Although such an attitude recognizes competing groupings within patterns of notes, it is profoundly mistaken in failing to grant priority to cultural insiders who clap, dance, or move to this music, and for whom, therefore, the ambiguity that (mainly Western) listeners perceive is simply non-existent – which is not to deny the existence of hierarchized multiple meanings. As for the preponderance of triplets in the transcriptions, I might remind readers who find them unwieldly, fussy, or uneconomical that there is a long and distinguished tradition of notating Ghanaian music this way. (The scores of Ephraim Amu, for example, are full of such notations. Excerpts are reproduced in my "The Impact of Language on Musical Composition in Ghana: An Introduction to the Musical Style of Ephraim Amu" and "The Making of a Composer: An Interview with Dr. Ephraim Amu." See also F. Onwona Osafo, "An African Orchestra in Ghana."). The existence of such a tradition does not, of course, mean that there is nothing wrong with triplet notations. One solution has been to use compound meters such as 6/8 and 12/8 and thus to dispense with triplet markings, as Nketia, for example, does in his *Folk Songs of Ghana*. If, however, we grant that different meters carry different sorts of connotations (based, for example, on the history of their usage), then we may not simply substitute 6/8 for a triplet-dominated 2/4 without confronting this network of associations. In this book, I take 2/4 to indicate a normative two in a bar, while 6/8 represents a normative but divided two in a bar. Triplet subdivisions in 2/4 meter are therefore closer to the surface than quaver subdivisions in 6/8. One would have to deny this essential difference in order to insist on rewriting all my 2/4 examples as 6/8s. This is one instance in which apparent elegance in representation distorts musical reality.
4. This characteristic rhythm has been noted in a number of studies of Ghanaian music. See, for example, Nketia's *Folk Songs of Ghana* (pp. 6–7), where the rhythm is transcribed as  I have done here. George Dor renders it as throughout his study, "The Alavanyo Orchestra." Although the two versions are, in one sense, equivalent, they suggest

different things. Nketia's version suggests a syncopated pattern, presumably one in which the normative beat is externalized or simply imagined elsewhere. Dor's 3+3+2 figure, on the other hand, suggests an additive process. In Chapter 7, I question the relevance of additive conceptions of meter to African music.

5. Hornbostel was especially sensitive to tonal and "phenomenal" accents. Although he did not use the actual formulation "phenomenal accent," his view of an accent as "any quality that differentiates one tone from another" is broad enough to encompass the sense of a phenomenal accent (see Hornbostel, *Opera Omnia*, p. 265; for further discussion of Hornbostel's terms, see Blum, "European Musical Terminology and the Music of Africa"). Lerdahl and Jackendoff provide a more formal definition: "By *phenomenal accent* we mean any event at the musical surface that gives emphasis or stress to a moment in the musical flow. Included in this category are attack points of pitch-events, local stresses such as sforzandi, sudden changes in dynamics of timbre, long notes, leaps to relatively high or low notes, harmonic changes, and so on" (*A Generative Theory of Tonal Music*, p. 17). Phenomenal accents are to be distinguished from *structural accents* (which depend on "melodic/harmonic points of gravity in a phrase or section") and metrical accents. In the Northern Ewe repertoire, phenomenal accents play a more important role than metrical accents; structural accents play only a minor role.
6. We have touched here on only a handful of Northern Ewe children's game songs. For further discussion, see Egblewogbe, *Games and Songs as Education Media*, in which games such as *atikaka*, *aḍi*, *aklamatoe*, and *srɔ̃ɖeɖe* are identified. Also of interest is Gladys Otubea Offei's "Ga Children's Songs," which includes a number of songs found also in the Northern Ewe area, thus lending support to the view that children freely and frequently borrow game songs from elsewhere. It is of course possible that, in this particular instance, Ga children are the ones who have borrowed from Ewe children. Our interest here is not so much in who borrowed from whom but in the fact of borrowing itself.
7. For another "compositional" approach to the understanding of African song, see Nketia's "The Linguistic Aspect of Style in African Music."
8. I have written at greater length elsewhere about the Akpafu funeral dirge in the context of Akpafu funeral practices. See my "Music in the Funeral Traditions of the Akpafu." For another account of Akpafu religious music, see Agudze, "The Music of Tokpaikor Shrine in Akpafu."
9. The particular generative view of musical structure developed here draws on the work of Heinrich Schenker (see his *Five Graphic Musical Analyses* for a good example of his work). This perspective, together with its representation by means of a graphic notation, informs my analyses in "Variation Procedures in Northern Ewe Song." See also R. G. S. Sprigge's "A Song from Eweland's Adangbe" for a "semiological" analysis of African song.
10. Other studies that, although not framed in these specific terms, contribute to the development of a poetics of Ghanaian song, include Marion Kilson, *Kpele Lala: Ga Religious Songs and Symbols*; Nketia, "The Linguistic Aspect of Style"; Avorgbedor, "The Transmission, Preservation, and Realisation of Song Texts"; Anyidoho, "Realism in Oral Narrative Performance"; Agawu, "On an African Song from Akpafu"; Barbara L. Hampton, "Music and Gender in Ga Society: *Adaawe* Song Poetry"; Paul Wiegräbe, "Ewelieder" – to name but a few.

4 Rhythms of drumming and dancing

1. Nketia has taken note of this influence: "The musical influence the Akan have had on other Ghanaians, on the Ga and Ewe for example, has been mainly in the use of open drums and certain kinds of songs. The Akan atumpan and asafo drums, for example, are used by both Ga and Ewe, often along with the Akan texts for these drums" (*Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana*, p. 5). Although it has been three decades since that statement was made, no study of the nature and extent of this influence has appeared.
2. The idea that African music is associated with movement has a long history. Hornbostel wrote in 1928 that "African music is not conceivable without dancing" ("African Negro Music," p. 62). He also remarked, as Stephen Blum has recently reminded us, that "song, like speech, is sounding gesture originally not detached from that of the limbs." Blum comments that "a listener who does not respond physically, in one way or another, to the singer's motions 'hears tones, but not the melody'" ("European Musical Terminology and the Music of Africa," p. 11). Nketia, too, has written that "in the traditional set up, no performer of African music stands still or sits rigidly without articulating the rhythm or the underlying beat in some form of bodily movement" (*Preparatory Exercises in African Rhythm*, p. 2). More recently, John Blacking has emerged as one of the strongest advocates of this conjunction (see especially his collection of essays, *The Anthropology of the Body*). For a lucid introduction to the issues involved in analyzing music as movement, including a discussion of "movement patterns in African music" based on a conception of music as "the sonic product of action," see John Baily, "Music Structure and Human Movement." Also of interest is Gerhard Kubik, "Pattern Perception and Recognition in African Music."
3. Nketia, *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana*, pp. 17–31.
4. See, for example, Locke's "Principles of Offbeat Timing and Cross-Rhythm in Southern Ewe Dance Drumming"; Pressing, "Rhythmic Design in the Support Drums of Agbadza"; Cudjoe, "The Techniques of Ewe Drumming"; Kubik, "The Phenomenon of Inherent Rhythms in East and Central African Instrumental Music" and "The Emics of African Musical Rhythm"; Fiagbedzi, "A Preliminary Inquiry into Inherent Rhythms in Anlo Dance Drumming," Willie Anku, *Structural Set Analysis of African Music 1: Adowa*, and Anku, *Structural Set Analysis of African Music 2: Bawa*.
5. For a brisk introduction to Ghanaian dances, including several of the Northern Ewe ones studied here, see Paschal Younge, *Musical Traditions of Ghana: A Handbook for Music Teachers and Instructors of West African Drumming*. On Ghanaian and Nigerian dances, see Patience Kwakwa, "The Dynamics of Music and Dance Integrations in Traditional Societies" and "Expression and Characterization in Traditional Dances: A Case Study of the Possession Dance." Also of interest is Peggy Harper, "The Role of Dance in the Gèlèdè Ceremonies of the Village of Ijìó."
6. Adanua's transcription; see his "*Adevu*: A Study of Ve Hunters' Music," fol. 42.
7. Amoaku, "Symbolism in Traditional Institutions and Music of the Ewe of Ghana," fol. 211.
8. Ofori, "*Egbanegba*: A Traditional Musical Type of Northern Eweland," fol. 12.
9. I have made a few minor changes in the two transcriptions. Apart from leaving out the vocal parts, I have kept all instrumental parts in 2/4, rather than mixing 2/4 and 6/8.
10. Some other dances found among the Northern Ewe but not discussed here include *Agbeyeye/Akpese*, *Asiko*, *Gbɔtowɔwɔ*, *Agblɛ̃uwo*, *Asraye*, *Gogodze*, *Adowa*, *Sikyi*, *Kpanlogo*, *Akpi*, *Ò̩dúm*, *Atikpladza*, *Apasemaka*, *Totoeme*, and *Atigare* (listed, with reference to where they are found, in Adusu, *Minutes of the First Meeting of the Committee for*

Research into Our Traditional Music and Literature). Information about some of them may be found in Younge, *Musical Traditions of Ghana*; Dor, "The Alavanyo Orchestra"; and Togbede, "*Totoeme*: A Case Study of a Northern Ewe Recreational Musical Type." But even these sources only hint at the wealth of material waiting to be collected.

11. Dowoeh, "The Music of Gbolo," fols. 30–31.
12. Ibid.
13. The three types of rhythmic procedure identified here are obviously related to Nketia's speech-signal-dance model. My Type 1 is virtually identical to Nketia's speech mode, my Type 2 has been reformulated from Nketia's signal mode to emphasize its communicative dimensions, and my Type 3 likewise stresses the play element in Nketia's dance mode. See Nketia, *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana*, pp. 17–31.
14. There is by now such a large body of writings on so-called talking drums that an extended introduction to the literature would be superfluous here. Although preceded by such valuable studies as P. A. Witte's "Zur Trommelsprache bei den Ewe-Leuten" (which deals with Togolese-Ewe practices that are themselves borrowed from the Akan) and R. S. Rattray's "The Drum Language of West Africa," the best introduction remains John Carrington's *Talking Drums of Africa*. Carrington's ideas have recently been appropriated for a more theoretical purpose by Walter Ong in his "African Talking Drums and Oral Noetics." For a magisterial study of Yoruba Dùndún traditions, see Akin Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*. Also of interest are Simha Arom and France Cloarec-Heiss, "Le langage tambouriné des Banda-Linda (R.C.A.)" and David Locke with Godwin Agbeli, "A Study of Drum Language in Adzogbo." For an innovative recent study, see Kwesi Yankah, "Voicing and Drumming in the Poetry of Praise."
15. Dowoeh, "The Music of Gbolo," fols. 144–48. Here, too, I have altered Dowoeh's transcription slightly in order to keep the entire texture in a single meter.
16. On the role of *ḍòndón* drums, see Euba, *Yoruba Drumming*; Chernoff, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility*, pp. 52–54, and Locke, *Drum Damba*.
17. Hornbostel, "African Negro Music," p. 52.

5 Rhythms of musical performance

1. Nketia, "The Intensity Factor in African Music," p. 56. See also Ruth M. Stone, *Let the Inside Be Sweet*, for an extended and theoretically sophisticated study of West African (specifically Kpelle of Liberia) performing practice.
2. For an outline of a formal method for the study of networks, see the concluding section, "Alternative Conceptions of Musical Unity: Some Speculations," of Richard Cohn and Douglas Dempster, "Hierarchical Unity, Plural Unities: Toward a Reconciliation."
3. For a fuller study of notions of play, see Nketia, *The Play-Concept in African Music*.
4. Akorli and Dake, "The Historical Background of Ziavi Zigi."
5. Fiagbedzi identifies nine rhythmic "motives" for the Southern Ewe repertoire, of which our short–long pattern lies second in his table (see "The Music of the Anlo," fol. 334).
6. The idea that African musical structure is hierarchical, and that it may be usefully analyzed by means of concepts of background and foreground associated with the theories of Heinrich Schenker, or by linguistic concepts of deep and surface structures, has played a role, albeit an auxiliary one, in a number of analytical studies. Such thinking is already present in Hornbostel's 1928 article, "African Negro Music," in which reductive sketches labeled "structure" accompany a number of his analyses. John

Blacking's analyses of Venda music have similarly been informed by conceptions of surface and depth. In *Venda Children's Songs*, for example, he identifies "tone rows" (p. 187) while his "Tonal Organization in the Music of Two Venda Initiation Schools" develops a more precise view of pitch hierarchy. Also of interest is Kenichi Tsukada, "Variation and Unity in African Harmony: A Study of *Mukanda* Songs of the Luvale in Zambia." For a Northern Ewe application, see my "Variation Procedures in Northern Ewe Song." A broader discussion of the relevance of Schenkerian concepts to ethnomusicological analysis may be found in Jonathan Stock, "The Application of Schenkerian Analysis to Ethnomusicology: Problems and Possibilities."

7. Here the differences between the Zìavi Zígí group's 1986 and 1992 performances are especially telling. In 1992, *Àdèʊ́* was one of their well-rehearsed and strongly performed dances, complete with hunters' uniform, extended recounting of acts of bravery at the beginning of the performance, and an apparent reversal of traditional gender roles: women carried the main burden of the dance.

6 Rhythms of folktale performance

1. Anyidoho, "Oral Poetics and Traditions of Verbal Art in Africa," p. 155.
2. Marie Maclean, *Narrative as Performance*, p. 7.
3. Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," p. 150. For a concise explanation of Jakobson's terms, see Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, pp. 76–87. A more detailed explication may be found in Linda Waugh, "The Poetic Function and the Nature of Language." For another adaptation of Jakobson to the analysis of African materials, see Gilbert Rouget, "African Traditional Non-Prose Forms," p. 55. Of related interest is the concluding section of Rouget's "Court Songs and Traditional History in the Ancient Kingdoms of Porto-Novo and Abomey." On the narrative techniques used in African folktale performance, see Okpewho, *African Oral Literature*, pp. 70–104. On the use of parallelism, see Akosua Anyidoho, "Linguistic Parallels in Traditional Akan Appellation Poetry."
4. The tune of Example 6.3 is in fact a popular Ga melody known as "Nyontsere." For a transcription, see Mpereh, *Rudiments of Music*, p. 25.

7 Epilogue: representing African rhythm

1. Adanua, "*Adevu*: A Study of Ve Hunters' Music," fol. 70.
2. See my "Variation Procedures in Northern Ewe Song," pp. 221–23.
3. On musical archetypes, see Leonard B. Meyer, "Exploiting Limits: Creation, Archetypes, and Style Change" and his *Style and Music*.
4. On downdrift, see Jean-Marie Hombert, "Universals of Downdrift"; see also Florence Dolphyne, *The Akan (Twi-Fante) Language*, pp. 56–57.
5. Discussed further in my "Tone and Tune."
6. Suzanne Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, p. 65.
7. Jones, *Studies in African Music*, vol. 1, p. 16.
8. Schenker, "Organic Structure in Sonata Form," pp. 50–51. Of related interest is Lazarus Ekwueme's adaptation of Schenker's theories to the analysis of African rhythm. See his "Structural Levels of Rhythm and Form in African Music."
9. Jones, *Studies in African Music*, vol. 1, p. 32.

10. For an illuminating discussion of this problem in connection with English verse, see Raymond Monelle, "Music Notation and the Poetic Foot."
11. Jones, *Studies in African Music*, vol. 1, p. 32.
12. Ibid., p. 30.
13. Nketia, *The Music of Africa*, p. 150.

Bibliography

Adanua, Anthony Kwame, "*Adevu*: A Study of Ve Hunters' Music." Diploma thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1990.

Aduonum, Kwasi, "A Compilation, Analysis and Adaptation of Selected Ghanaian Folktale Songs for Use in the Elementary General Music Class." PhD dissertation, University of Michigan, 1980.

Adusu, J. S., *Minutes of the First Meeting of the Committee for Research into Our Traditional Music and Literature, 26th February, 1982.*

Agawu, V. Kofi, "The Impact of Language on Musical Composition in Ghana: An Introduction to the Musical Style of Ephraim Amu." *Ethnomusicology* 28(1)(1984): 37–73.

"The Making of a Composer: An Interview with Dr. Ephraim Amu." *The Black Perspective in Music* 15(2)(1987): 51–63.

"Tone and Tune: The Evidence for Northern Ewe Music." *Africa* 58(3)(1988): 127–46.

"Music in the Funeral Traditions of the Akpafu." *Ethnomusicology* 32(1)(1988): 75–105.

"On an African Song from Akpafu." *Sonus* 10(1)(1989):22–39.

"Variation Procedures in Northern Ewe Song." *Ethnomusicology* 34(2)(1990): 221–43.

"Representing African Music." *Critical Inquiry* 18(2)(1992): 245–66.

"Theory and Practice in the Analysis of the Nineteenth-Century *Lied*." *Music Analysis* 11(1)(1992): 3–36.

Agudze, Francis Symon Komla, "The Music of Tokpaikor Shrine in Akpafu. A Case Study of the Role of Tokpaikor Music in Akpafu Traditional Worship." Diploma thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1991.

Akorli, E. N. K. and W. K. Dake, "The Historical Background of Ziavi Zigi." Typescript, n.d.

Amedekey, E.Y., *The Culture of Ghana: A Bibliography.* Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1970.

Amenumey, D. E. K., *The Ewe in Pre-Colonial Times: A Political History with Special Emphasis on the Anlo, Ge and Krepi.* Accra: Sedco Publishing, 1986.

Ames, David W., and Anthony V. King, *Glossary of Hausa Music and its Social Contexts.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971.

Amoaku, William Komla, *African Songs and Rhythms for Children.* Mainz: Schott, 1971.

"Symbolism in Traditional Institutions and Music of the Ewe of Ghana." PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1975.

Ampene, Kwame, "Reflections on the Early History of the Guan." *Guan Research Papers. Journal of the Guan Historical Society of Ghana* 1(2)(1980): 14–23.

Amu, Ephraim, "Yam Festival at Peki." In A. A. Opoku, *Festivals of Ghana*. Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation (1970): 63–69.

Anku, Willie, "Rhythmic Procedures in Akan Adowa." MA thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1986.

"Procedures in African Drumming: A Study of Akan/Ewe Traditions and African Drumming in Pittsburgh." PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1988.

Structural Set Analysis of African Music 1: Adowa. Legon: Soundstage Production, 1992.

Structural Set Analysis of African Music 2: Bawa. Legon: Soundstage Production, 1993.

Anon, *Language Guide (Ewe Version)*. Accra: Bureau of Ghana Languages, 1986.

Ansre, Gilbert, *The Tonal Structure of Ewe*. MA thesis, Hartford Seminar Foundation, Hartford, Connecticut, 1991.

Anyidoho, Akosua, "Linguistic Parallels in Traditional Akan Appellation Poetry." *Research in African Literatures*, 22(1)(1991) : 67–81.

Anyidoho, Kofi, "Musical Patterns and Verbal Structures: Aspects of Prosody in an African Oral Poetry." *Black Orpheus* 6(1)(1981): 27–44.

"Oral Poetics and Traditions of Verbal Art in Africa." Ph.D dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1983.

"Realism in Oral Narrative Performance." *Acta Ethnographica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 34(1–4)(1986–88): 49–63.

Arom, Simha, *African Polyphony and Polyrhythm: Musical Structure and Methodology*. Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Arom, Simha and France Cloarec-Heiss, "Le langage tambouriné des Banda-Linda (R. C. A.)". In L. Bouquiaux (ed.), *Théories et méthodes en linguistique africaine*. Communications au 11ème Congrès de la Société de Linguistique d'Afrique Occidentale (SLAO), Yaounde, April 1974. Paris: Selaf, 1976: 113–69.

Asamoah, Festus K., "Mourning Songs of Northern Eweland: A Study of the Music of Northern Ewe Women." Diploma thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1967.

Avorgbedor, Daniel, "The Transmission, Preservation, and Realisation of Song Texts: A Psycho-Musical Approach." *Cross Rhythms: Occasional Papers in African Folklore* 2(1985), 67–92.

"The Interaction of Music and Spoken Texts in the Context of Anlo-Ewe Music." *Black Orpheus* 6(1)(1986): 17–26.

"The Construction and Manipulation of Temporal Structures in Yewe Cult Music: A Multi-Dimensional Approach." *African Music* 6(4)(1987): 4–18.

Baily, John, "Music Structure and Human Movement." In Peter Howell, Ian Cross, and Robert West (eds.), *Musical Structure and Cognition*. London: Academic Press, 1985:237–58.

Barber, Karin, *I Could Speak Until Tomorrow: Oriki, Women and the Past in a Yoruba Town*. Edinburgh University Press, 1991.

Bareis, Urban, "Formen neo-traditioneller Musik in Kpando, Ghana." In Veit Erlmann (ed.), *Populäre Musik in Afrika*. Berlin: Museum für Volkerkunde, 1991: 59–108.

Bame, Kwabena N., *Profiles in African Traditional Popular Culture: Consensus and Conflict. Dance, Drama, Festivals and Funerals*. New York: Clear Type Press, 1991.

Bebey, Francis, *African Music: A People's Art*. Translated by Josephine Bennett. New York: Lawrence Hill, 1975 (original edition 1969).

Blacking, John, "Some Notes on a Theory of Rhythm Advanced by Erich von Hornbostel." *African Music* 1(1955): 12–20.

Venda Children's Songs: A Study in Ethnomusicological Analysis. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1967.

"Tonal Organization in the Music of Two Venda Initiation Schools." *Ethnomusicology* 14(1)(1970): 1–56.

How Musical is Man? Seattle and London: University of Seattle Press, 1973.

The Anthropology of the Body. ASA Monograph No. 15. London: Academic Press, 1977.

"The Problem of 'Ethnic' Perceptions in the Semiotics of Music." In Wendy Steiner (ed.), *The Sign in Music and Literature.* Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1981: 184–94.

Blum, Stephen, "European Musical Terminology and the Music of Africa." In Bruno Nettl and Philip V. Bohlman (eds.), *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music.* University of Chicago Press, 1991:3–36.

Boateng, D. A., *Songs for Infant Schools.* London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

Brese, Rowland Senyo, "*Avihawo*: A Study of Funeral Dirges of the Tafi People of Hohoe District." Diploma thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1991.

Bukh, Jette, *The Village Woman in Ghana.* Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1979.

Capo, Hounkpati B. C., *Renaissance du Gbe: Réflexions Critiques et Constructives sur L'Eve, le Fon, le Gen, l'Aja, le Gun,* etc. Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1988.

A Comparative Phonology of Gbe. New York: Foris Publications, 1991.

Carrington, John, *Talking Drums of Africa.* London: The Carey Kingsgate Press, 1949.

Chernoff, John Miller, *African Rhythm and African Sensibility: Aesthetics and Social Action in African Musical Idioms.* University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Cohn, Richard and Douglas Dempster, "Hierarchical Unity, Plural Unities: Toward a Reconciliation." In Katherine Bergeron and Philip Bohlman (eds.), *Disciplining Music: Musicology and its Canons.* University of Chicago Press, 1992:156–81.

Cooke, Peter, "Ganda Xylophone Music: Another Approach." *African Music* 4(4)(1970): 62–80.

Cudjoe, S. D., "The Techniques of Ewe Drumming and the Social Importance of Music in Africa." *Phylon* 14(1953): 28–91.

Dakubu, M. E. Kropp, *The Languages of Ghana.* London: Kegan Paul International, 1988.

Dolphyne, Florence Abena, *The Akan (Twi-Fante) Language: Its Sound Systems and Tonal Structure.* Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1988.

Dor, George Worlasi Kwasi, "The Alavanyo Orchestra. A Legacy of Europe on Indigenous Musical Cultures of Africa. (A Case Study)." BMus. dissertation, University of Ghana, Legon, 1986.

Dowoeh, W. I. C., "The Music of Gbolo." Diploma thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1980.

Dzobo, N. K., "The Integrity of the Socio-Cultural Identity of Black Peoples." *Présence Africaine* 117–18(1991): 165–75.

Asigbe Xletigbale 1986 [Marketday calendar for 1986]. Ho: E. P. Church Press, 1986.

Egblewogbe, E. Y., *Games and Songs as Education Media: A Case Study Among the Ewes of Ghana.* Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1975.

"Social and Psychological Aspects of Greeting Among the Ewes of West Africa." *Research Review* 6(2)(1990): 8–18.

Ekwueme, Lazarus, "Structural Levels of Rhythm and Form in African Music with Particular Reference to the West Coast," *African Music* 5(4)(1975–76): 27–35.

Euba, Akin, *Yoruba Drumming: The Dùndún Tradition*. Lagos and Bayreuth: Elekoto Music Centre and Bayreuth African Studies Series, 1991.

Evans-Pritchard, E. E., "The Dance." *Africa* 1(4) (1928): 446–62.

Feld, Steven, *Voices of the Rainforest* [CD] Salem, Massachusetts: Rykodisc, 1991.

Fiagbedzi, Nissio, "The Music of the Anlo-Ewe of Ghana: An Ethnomusicological Enquiry into its History, Cultural Matrix, and Style." PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1977.

Religious Music Traditions in Africa: A Critical Evaluation of Contemporary Problems and Challenges. Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1979.

"A Preliminary Inquiry into Inherent Rhythms in Anlo Dance Drumming." *Journal of the Performing Arts* (Accra), 1(1):(1980): 83–92.

Finnegan, Ruth, *Oral Literature in Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

Gansemans, Jos and Barbara Schmidt-Wrenger, *ZentralAfrika*. Musikgeschichte in Bildern, vol. 1, no. 9. Leipzig: VEB Deutscher Verlag für Musik, 1986.

Gray, John, *African Music: A Bibliographical Guide to the Traditional, Popular, Art, and Liturgical Musics of Sub-Saharan Africa*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1991.

Hall, Edward, *Ghanaian Languages*. Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1983.

Hampton, Barbara, "Music and Gender in Ga Society: Adaawe Song Poetry." In Jacqueline Codgell Djedje (ed.), *African Musicology: Current Trends*. Vol. 2. Los Angeles: African Studies Center, 1992: 135–49.

Harper, Peggy, "The Role of Dance in the Gèlèdè Ceremonies of the Village of Ijìó." In Kapila Vatoyayan (ed.), *Concepts of Space Ancient and Modern*. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. Abhinav Publications, 1991.

Hawkes, Terence, *Structuralism and Semiotics*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

Höftmann, Hildegard, *The Structure of Lelemi Language*. Leipzig: Verlag Enzyklopä die Leipzig, 1971.

Hombert, Jean-Marie, "Universals of Downdrift: Their Phonetic Basis and Significance for a Theory of Tone." *Studies in African Linguistics*, Supplement 5(1974): 169–83.

Hornbostel, E. M. von, "African Negro Music." *Africa* 1(1) (1928): 30–62.

Hornbostel Opera Omnia, Vol. 1, edited by K. P. Wachsmann, D. Christensen, and H. P. Reinecke. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975.

Hountondji, Paulin J., "Recapturing." In V.Y. Mudimbe (ed.), *The Surreptitious Speech: Présence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness 1947–1987*. University of Chicago Press, 1992: 238–48.

Jakobson, Roman, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics." In T. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language*. T. Sebeok. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960:350–77.

Jones, A. M., *African Music in Northern Rhodesia and Some Other Places*. Livingstone, N. Rhodesia: The Rhodes-Livingstone Museum, 1949.

"African Rhythm." *Africa* 24(1954): 26–47.

Studies in African Music. 2 vols. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.

Keil, Charles, *Tiv Song: The Sociology of Art in a Classless Society*. University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Kilson, Marion, *Kpele Lala: Ga Religious Songs and Symbols*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

Koetting, James, "Analysis and Notation of West African Drum Ensemble Music." *Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology* 3(1970): 115–46.

Kramer, Lawrence, *Music and Poetry: The Nineteenth Century and After*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.

Kropp, M. E., *Lefana, Akpafu and Avatime with English Gloss.* Comparative African Wordlists, no. 3. Legon: Institute of African Studies, 1967.

Kubik, Gerhard, "The Phenomenon of Inherent Rhythms in East and Central African Instrumental Music." *African Music* 3(1)(1962): 33–42.

"Pattern Perception and Recognition in African Music." In John Blacking and J. Kealiinohomoku (eds.), *The Performing Arts: Music and Dance.* New York: Mouton, 1979.

"The Emics of African Musical Rhythm." *Cross Rhythms* 2(1985): 26–66.

Kwakwa, Patience, "The Dynamics of Music and Dance Integrations in Traditional Societies." Paper presented at the International Conference on African Music and Dance, Bellagio, Italy, 1992.

"Expression and Characterization in Traditional Dances: A Case Study of the Possession Dance." Paper presented at the International Conference on African Music and Dance, Bellagio, Italy, 1992.

Kwamena-Poh, "Who are the Guan?" *Guan Research Papers. Journal of the Guan Historical Society of Ghana* 1(1)(1980): 4–13.

Langer, Suzanne, *Philosophy in a New Key.* New York: Penguin Books, 1942.

Lerdahl, Fred and Ray Jackendoff, *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music.* Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1983.

Locke, David, "Improvisation in West African Musics." *Music Educators' Journal* 66(5)(1980): 125–32.

"Principles of Offbeat Timing and Cross-Rhythm in Southern Eve Dance Drumming." *Ethnomusicology* 26(2)(1982): 217–46.

Drum Gahu: A Systematic Method for an African Percussion Piece. Crown Point, Indiana: White Cliffs Media Company, 1987.

Drum Damba: Talking Drum Lessons. Crown Point, Indiana: White Cliffs Media Company, 1990.

Locke, David, with Godwin Agbeli, "A Study of Drum Language in Adzogbo." *African Music* 6(1), 1980: 31–51.

Maclean, Marie, *Narrative as Performance: The Baudelairean Experiment.* London: Routledge, 1988.

Manoukian, Madeline, *The Ewe-Speaking People of Togoland and the Gold Coast.* London: International African Institute, 1952.

Mensah, Atta Annan, *Folk Songs for Schools.* Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1971.

Meyer, Leonard B., "Exploiting Limits: Creation, Archetypes, and Style Change." *Daedalus* (1980): 177–205.

Style and Music: Theory, History, and Ideology. University of Philadelphia Press, 1989.

Monelle, Raymond, "Music Notation and the Poetic Foot." *Comparative Literature* 41(3)(1989): 252–69.

Monts, Lester P., *An Annotated Glossary of Vai Musical Language and its Social Contexts.* Paris: Selaf, 1990.

Mpereh, S. V. Jnr., *Rudiments of Music.* Grade 1. Sekondi, Ghana: Samdinesab Publications, 1990.

Nketia, J. H. Kwabena, *Drumming in Akan Communities of Ghana.* Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1963.

Folk Songs of Ghana. Legon: University of Ghana, 1963.

Preparatory Exercises in African Rhythm. Legon: Institute of African Studies, 1963.

"The Interrelations of African Music and Dance." *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 17(2)(1965): 91–101.

Music in African Cultures. A Review of the Meaning and Significance of Traditional African Music. University of Ghana: Institute of African Studies, 1966.

Our Drums and Drummers. Accra: State Publishing Corporation, 1968.

The Music of Africa. New York: Norton, 1974.

"The Juncture of the Social and the Musical: The Methodology of Cultural Analysis." *The World of Music* 23(1)(1981): 22–35.

"The Intensity Factor in African Music." *Journal of Folklore Research* 25 (1988):53–86.

The Play-Concept in African Music. Laura Bolton Lectures, edited by Tom Vennum. Tempe, Arizona: Hurd Museum, 1991.

"Generative Processes in Seperewa Music," n.d.

"The Linguistic Aspect of Style in African Music." Paper read at the International Conference on African Music and Dance, Bellagio, Italy, 1992.

Offei, Gladys Otubea, "Ga Children's Songs." Diploma thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1991.

Ofori, Esther Akosua, "*Egbanegba*: A Traditional Musical Type of Northern Eweland." Diploma thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 1980.

Okpewho, Isidore, *African Oral Literature: Backgrounds, Character, and Continuity.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Ong, Walter, "African Talking Drums and Oral Noetics." In *Interfaces of the Word: Studies in the Evolution of Consciouness and Culture.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977:92–120.

Opoku, A.A., *Festivals of Ghana.* Accra: Ghana Publishing Corporation, 1970.

Osafo, F. Onwona, "An African Orchestra in Ghana." *African Music* 1(4)(1957): 11–12.

Pantaleoni, Hewitt, "Takada Drumming." *African Music* 4(4)(1970):6–31.

"Three Principles of Timing in Anlo Dance Drumming." *African Music* 5(2)(1972): 50–63.

"Toward Understanding the Play of Atsimevu in Atsia." *African Music* 5(2)(1972):64–84.

"Toward Understanding the Play of Sogo in Atsia." *Ethnomusicology* 16(1)(1972): 1–37.

Pressing, Jeffrey, "Rhythmic Design in the Support Drums of Agbadza." *African Music* 6(1)(1983): 4–15.

Rattray, R. S., "The Drum Language of West Africa." *Journal of the African Society*, 22 (1922–23): 226–36, 302–16.

"The African Child in Proverb, Folklore, and Fact." *Africa* 6(4)(1933): 456–71.

Richards, Paul, *Coping with Hunger: Hazard and Experiment in an African Rice Farming System.* London: Allen and Unwin, 1986.

"Comment on Jane Guyer's 'The Multiplication of Labor,'" *Current Anthropology* 29(2)(1988): 264–65.

"Agriculture as Performance." Unpublished MS, n.d.

Rouget, Gilbert, "Tons de la langue en Gun (Dahomey) et tons du tambour." *Revue de Musicologie* 50(1964): 3–29.

"African Traditional Non-Prose Forms: Reciting, Declaiming, Singing and Strophic Structure." In Jack Berry, Robert Plant Armstrong, and John Povey (eds.), *Proceedings of a Conference on African Languages and Literatures, Northwestern University*, 1966: 45–58.

"Court Songs and Traditional History in the Ancient Kingdoms of Port-Novo and Abomey." In Klaus Wachsmann (ed.), *Essays on Music and History in Africa.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971:27–64.

"La répétition comme universel du langage musical. A propos d'un chant initiatique béninois." In Raffaele Pozzi (ed.), *La musica come linguaggio universale*. Florence: Olschki, 1990.

Schafer, R. Murray, *The Tuning of the World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.

Schenker, Heinrich, "Organic Structure in Sonata Form." In Maury Yeston (ed.), *Readings in Schenker Analysis and Other Approaches*. New Haven: Yale University Press 1977: 38–53.

Five Graphic Musical Analyses, edited by Felix Salzer. New York: Dover Publications, 1969.

Schneider, Marius, "Phonetische und metrische Korrelationen bei gesprochenen und gesungenen Ewe-Texten." *Archiv für Vergleichende Phonetik*, 7(1/2)(1943–4): 1–6.

"Tone and Tune in West African Music." *Ethnomusicology* 5(3)(1961): 204–15.

Schoenberg, Arnold, *Structural Functions of Harmony*. London: Faber, 1969.

Sprigge, R. G. S. "A Song from Eweland's Adangbe: Notes and Queries." *Ghana Notes and Queries* 10(1968): 23–28.

Stock, Jonathan, "The Application of Schenkerian Analysis to Ethnomusicology: Problems and Possibilities." *Music Analysis* 12(2)(1993): 215–40.

Stone, Ruth M., *Let the Inside Be Sweet: The Interpretation of Music Event among the Kpelle of Liberia*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982.

Dried Millet Breaking: Time, Words, and Song in the Woi Epic of the Kpelle. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.

Togbede, Lucas Isaac, "*Totoeme*: A Case Study of a Northern Ewe Recreational Musical Type." Diploma thesis, University of Ghana, 1991.

Tsukada, Kenichi, "Variation and Unity in African Harmony: A Study of *Mukanda* Songs of the Luvale in Zambia." In Janimura Ko, Mabuchi Usaburo, and Jakimoto Yuzo (eds.), *Florilegio Musicale: Festschrift Kataoka Gìdé zum 70. Geburtstag*. Tokyo: Ongaku no Jomosha, 1990:157–97.

Turkson, Adolphus, "Music and Games in Early African Childhood Education." *African Music Education* (University of Cape Coast, Ghana) 7 (1989): 1–22.

Verdon, Michel, *Songs of War and Death from the Slave Coast: Abutia Kloe, Ewe, Ghana*. New York: Folkways, 1982.

The Abutia-Ewe of West Africa: A Chiefdom that Never Was. Berlin and New York: Mouton, 1983.

Wachsmann, Klaus P., "Music." *Journal of the Folklore Institute*, Indiana University 6 (1969): 164–91.

Ward, W. E. F., "Music in the Gold Coast." *Gold Coast Review* 3(1927): 199–223.

Waugh, Linda, "The Poetic Function and the Nature of Language." *Poetics Today* 1a (1980): 57–82.

"Let's Take the Con out of Iconicity: Constraints on Iconicity in the Lexicon." *The American Journal of Semiotics* 9(1)(1992): 7–47.

Westermann, Dietrich, *Evefiala or Ewe–English Dictionary*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer, 1928.

The Languages of West Africa. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.

Wiegräbe, Paul, "Ewelieder." *Afrika und Übersee* 37 (1953): 99–108, 38 (1954): 17–26, 113–120, 155–64.

Witte, P. A., "Zur Trommelsprache bei der Ewe-Leuten," *Anthropos* 5(1910): 50–53.

Yankah, Kwesi, "Voicing and Drumming in the Poetry of Praise: The Case for Aural Literature." In Kofi Anyidoho *et al.* (eds.), *Interdisciplinary Dimensions of African Literature*. Washington, D.C.: Three Continents Press, 1985: 137–53.

Younge, Paschal Yao, *Musical Traditions of Ghana: A Handbook for Music Teachers and Instructors of West African Drumming*, Vol. 1. Legon: University of Ghana, School of Performing Arts, 1991.

Zemp, Hugo, *Musique Dan: La musique dans la pensée et la vie sociale d'une société africaine*. Paris and The Hague: Mouton.

Zielnica, Krzysztof, "Bibliographie der Ewe in Westafrika." *Acta Ethnologica et Linguistica* 38(1976): 1–177.

Index