Call-and-Response in Ewe Agbadza Songs: One Element in a Network of Musical Factors

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C all-and-response has iconic status as a sign of African musical style. As an approach to musical organization, call-and-response is geographically widespread on the continent and in the diaspora, is frequently used in a variety of ways, is found in many genres, and is employed on most instruments (Nketia 1974, 140 ff.). As a manner of musical process, call-and-response relationships foster collective participation in music-making, which is another oft-noted characteristic of African music. Paradoxically, the emblematic status of call-and-response in discourses about African music may mislead analysts into regarding it merely as a cliché, causing us to underestimate its musical sophistication. Countering the misconception that call-and-response is limited to simple back-and-forth alternation, this paper's analysis of twenty-five Agbadza songs of the Ewe people suggests that it provides a protean resource for making and appreciating vocal music. Call-and-response structures a song's form, highlights its text, and dramatizes its tune. The central point suggested in this article is that call-and-response is one component in a network of musical factors that interact within an overall system by which songs are created, performed, and contemplated.

This article begins with a brief introduction to the collaborative project in which the corpus of songs under consideration was collected. The main body of the paper describes the variable patterns of call-and-response between parts for song leader and for a singing group that can be observed in Agbadza. Other factors within the overall network

of musical elements also are introduced in less detail. Finally, close analysis of three songs illustrates how each Agbadza song attains distinction by its individual way of combining familiar factors. A food analogy beckons: many unique dishes may be cooked by following a traditional yet infinitely variable recipe.

The analytic approach employed in this paper evolved organically, so to speak, during the author's decades-long engagement with Ewe music in roles that have included student, performer, teacher, and scholar in disciplines of ethnomusicology, music theory, and world music performance. (See Locke 2005 for an account of my approach to teaching the "African ensemble.") In other words, the categories under analytic consideration were identified through the gradual process by which the author learned the music; the musical material itself suggested the factors that are of relevance and significance. To extend the food analogy to the process of categorization: I have carved the chicken at the joints.

Although the analytic categories invoked here were not artificially imposed upon Agbadza, we may ironically observe that many of these musical factors are also relevant to the analysis of non-African music. This article may be understood as exemplifying a point made by Kofi Agawu; namely, that productive contemplation of African music might best start with an assumption of resemblance rather than difference (Agawu 2003). In this vein, the paper intentionally minimizes the use of Ewe terminology and does not aspire to an ethnopoetic consideration of the meaning of Ewe words. One reason for this is that I am not fluent in the Ewe language; furthermore, I assume that readers of this journal likely are oriented more towards the comparative analysis of musical sound than the ethnographic context of Agbadza's vocal music. Nevertheless, as one Ewe-speaking

reviewer of an earlier draft of this paper cogently suggested, "Local nomenclature provides [insight about] indigenous perception and conception.… [Literal translations contain] vivid and kinetic images through which the Ewe imagine, perceive, and describe the roles of these singers." Interested readers will find a rich literature on this topic.

Two scholars of African music have exerted seminal influence on my analytic concepts and method: J. H. K. Nketia and A. M. Jones. From Nketia's voluminous output of scholarly writing, I learn that many idioms of African music can be meaningfully and relevantly analyzed by means of conventional categories, such as metric organization of musical time, rhythmic accentuation in musical motion, modal design of tonality, and texts and tunes shaped into recurring forms. From Jones, I take the methodological value of *in extenso* transcription as well as analytic axioms about (1) the significance of polyrhythmic relationships among all musical parts, and (2) the metric and rhythmic impact of the temporal proportion of 3:2. This paper intentionally avoids longstanding scholarly debates on issues germane to African music, such as how best to notate it or how to avoid imposing non-African perspectives. The goal is to inject into scholarly discourse musical features that are under-represented in the literature.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO AGBADZA
AND THE ALORWOYIE-LOCKE PROJECT

Cultural Context

The music of Agbadza consists of singing and drumming that is traditional to the Ewe people from Ghana, Togo, and Benin in West Africa (Jones 1959, 162 ff.). For the purposes of this paper, Agbadza songs may be taken as poems set to tunes; one pleasure of analysis is to discover the ways of cooperation and reinforcement between the poetry of

the text and the melo-rhythm of the tune.[1] The songs under consideration here were made by anonymous composers and are part of the Ewe community's common musical knowledge of its received tradition. The poems deal with events related to the wars and battles fought by the Anlo Ewe during the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries; the poems also can be interpreted as reflections on timeless human themes, such as struggle, survival, leadership, bravery, triumph, courage, sabotage, revenge, loyalty, and death. Although Agbadza songs are associated with funerals and memorial services, people sing them on formal occasions related to chieftaincy or informally for personal pleasure (see Burns 2005 for a description of the Ewe funeral context). Perhaps because these songs are part of a widely shared "folk knowledge," one hears them in genres other than Agbadza.

As is true of many ritual practices, a quotidian sense of place can be suspended through a performance of Agbadza. Normal temporal distinctions among past, present, and future may be altered. This transformative capability of musical performance seems widespread within African music-cultures (Knight 1984, 73, cited in Locke 2009, 112). In a recent performance class at Tufts University (Medford MA, USA), Nani Agbeli, the director of the African ensemble, said that when the music sounds good he feels that he is actually back in Africa, playing with his ancestors (Nani Agbeli, personal communication, 2011).

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[1] In contemporary practice of traditional music, texts need not be created before tunes, nor must a song be fully worked out prior to its creation during the stimulating context of performance. For information about the dynamism of Ewe performance practice, see Burns 2009, Dor 2004, and Gbolonyo 2009.

Alorwoyie's Work

The Agbadza songs discussed here derive from a project initiated by Gideon Foli Alorwoyie, a tenured professor of percussion at the University of North Texas (see Photo 1; see Davis 1984 for biographical information on Alorwoyie).

Photo 1. Gideon Foli Alorwoyie
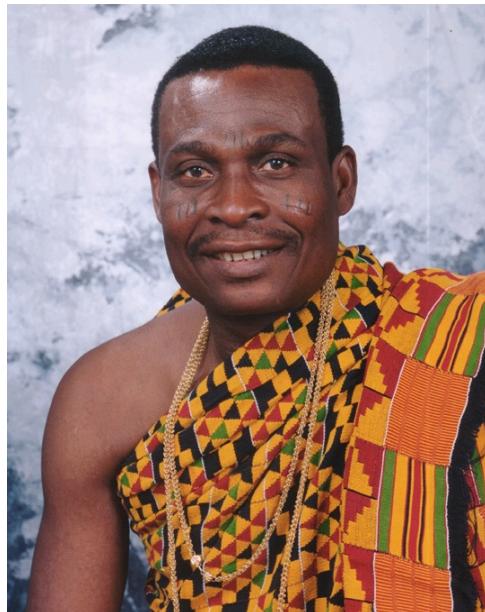
Alorwoyie's purpose was to revive how the elders did Agbadza "in the olden days." In an interview with the author, Alorwoyie explained:

> This project is something like a guideline. Until now no format has been laid down from the older generations for the younger generations. I am trying to let everyone know that there was a format to Agbadza in our grandfathers' time, but because it was not written for us to read, we are just doing things on our own. Formerly, a drummer would not start the drum before the song: drum rhythm patterns were put on songs, not the drum before the song. My elderly uncles told me that in the history of Agbadza, that is how they did it. They would play one drum pattern and sing one song until it was done. Then, the composer or the song leader would raise another one by singing the words to the song by himself before bringing it out for the group to join. While he is going through the song, if you are a talented gifted drummer, you should get your rhythm ready. If you want to play a good Agbadza drumming, you have to understand where the song is coming from. Then, you can make good music for yourself and the people in the community. I want drummers

> to have patience for the singer to come with the song. "Think of the song first, before you put your rhythm on it," that is my advice. In this project I am trying to let people know how the whole thing was brought from the past (paraphrased from interview).

On the basis of the meaning of the song lyrics and drum language texts, Prof. Alorwoyie paired together twenty-five songs with twenty-five compositions for lead and response drum. Although these twenty-five songs are well known among Ewe traditionalists, the language for the lead/response drum themes is not in wide circulation outside local drumming families. In gathering the drum language texts required, Alorwoyie focused his research among his elderly relatives. The linkage of song to drumming is his personal creative effort, which might be termed "a song cycle in twenty-five sections."

Alorwoyie produced and performed an in-studio recording of his arrangement of Agbadza with a troupe from his hometown, Anlo-Afiadenyigba. For each item, the lead singer raises the song in free rhythm, after which the call-and-response singing begins and the ensemble's rhythm section starts playing. When the music is settled, the lead drum calls in the response drum and then, with an ear to relationships with the song and the response drum theme, improvises on the drum language composition. After three to five minutes of intense music, the lead drum brings the song to a close with the Agbadza ending signal. Then, the lead singer raises the next song; thus it goes for all twenty-five items on the recording.

In Alorwoyie's revival of what I characterize as "old school Agbadza," music of the lead and response drums, energized by the interlocked phrases of the drum ensemble, fuses with song. The musical setting of the song lyrics and the drum language is a crucial dimension of their effectiveness as linguistic communication. In the ideal performative context imagined by Alorwoyie, the combination of language and music would seize the

listener with passionate feeling.[2] If we are to have insight into the affective life of the Ewe people, we need to understand the expressiveness of music sound. Thus, I would argue that the project of musical analysis can serve the ethnomusicological goal of understanding the songs in cultural context.

Locke's Work

I learned the songs by ear from the audio recording and taught them to members of the Agbekor Drum and Dance Society, a Boston-based performance group that I founded in 1979 (see Photo 2). Gradually, over a two-year process of weekly rehearsals, we learned all twenty-five items.

Photo 2. Alorwoyie with members of the Agbekor Drum and Dance Society

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[2] See Titon (1988, 9–11) for a model of music-culture that places affect at the heart of a musical performance.

During this period Alorwoyie and I annotated the song lyrics and drum language with valuable help from other scholars, including Klevor Abor, James Burns, and Faith Conant. Using only a variable speed cassette tape recorder, I transcribed by ear the recording into full scores of staff notation that show all melodic variations in the songs and the complete lead drumming line for each item. Accepting the risk of misrepresentation that an act of standardization entails, I distilled into one "standard tune" the variable ways a song is sung and did lead sheets for the lead *sogo* drum and the response *kidi* drum.[3] All items were transcribed in what I prefer to term "ternary-quadruple time"—a close equivalent to a 12/8 time signature—and song finals were set on pitch class G or in a few cases pitch class D.[4]

The Polyrhythm of the Agbadza Drum Ensemble[5]

If call-and-response is iconic of African music, Agbadza is a synecdoche of Ewe music. Its bell part is the well-known asymmetrical timeline that cycles seven long and short temporal values over and over—LLSLLLS—according to the additive formula 2+2+1+2+2+2+1 (Agawu 2006, 7–10). The twelve-pulse time span lends itself to a matrix

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[3] This article focuses on call-and-response in Agbadza songs; the music of the lead and response drums will not be discussed in any significant detail here.

[4] This data, together with my detailed analysis, is freely available as an online, interactive monograph (see http://sites.tufts.edu/davidlocke/Agbadza). Ewe language texts, lead sheets of songs and drumming, and an audio CD have been published (see Alorwoyie and Locke, in press).

[5] "Polyrhythm" is another contested term in discourse about African music. Meki Nzewi suggests that "ensemble thematic cycle" better conveys the unity of an ensemble texture while "polyrhythm," on the other hand, distorts an indigenous point-of-view by breaking apart what is intended to be indivisible. Although I take Nzewi's point about the risks inherent in utilizing terminology without careful critique, I do not think that "polyrhythm" violates an essentialized "African" view: I argue that each part exerts its own force but also exists within its ensemble setting.

of 3:2 proportions in a classic example of African polymeter.[6] The musical themes played

on rattle and high-pitched drum in the Agbadza ensemble are widespread in the Ewe

repertoire. Distinctive to the Alorwoyie version of Agbadza is the "in-six" handclap part,

which intertwines with the tacit ternary tactus, i.e., six quarter notes in the time of four

dotted quarter notes (see Figure 1). In comparison to other idioms of African music, Ewe

music is relatively well studied but here I neither rehearse this substantial discourse nor

enter the fray of competing theoretical paradigms. Readers may find my analysis of the

instrumental music of Agbadza in the online monograph.

Figure 1. Agbadza ensemble parts

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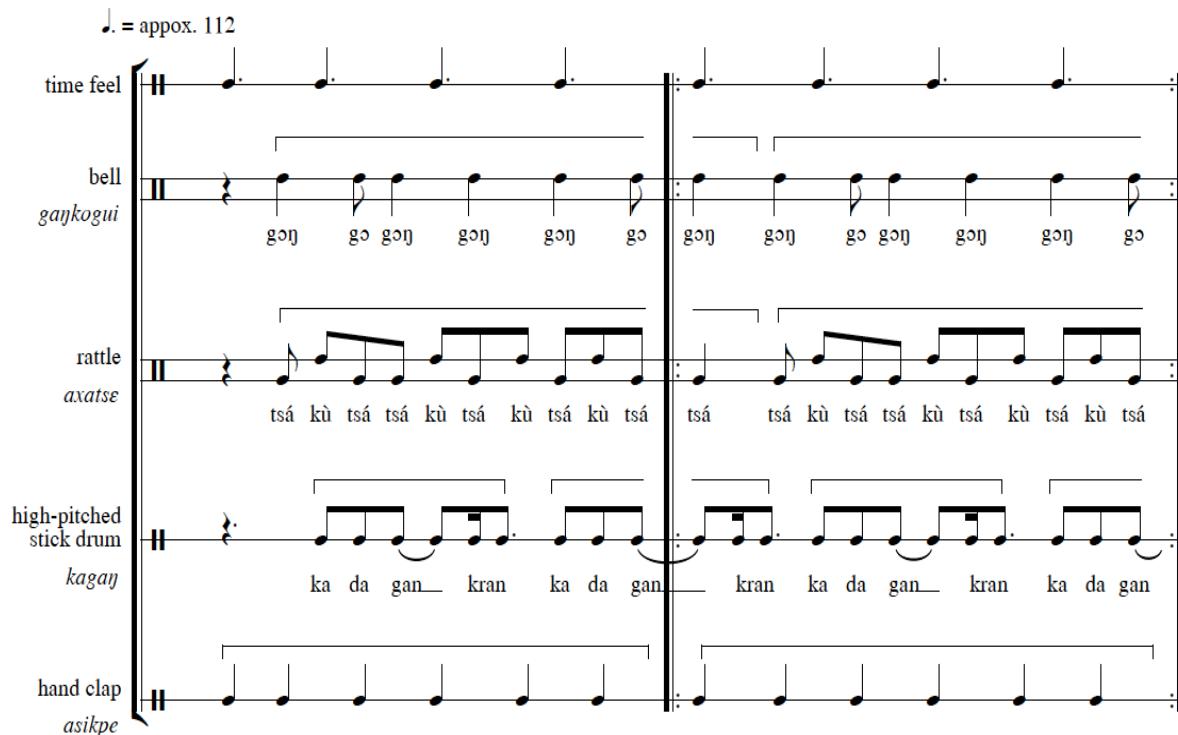
[6] I am willing to invoke polymeter as an analytic concept, despite well-taken reservations about the validity of the concept from other theorists of African music. See Nzewi (1997, 40–41) and Burns (2010, pars. 12–19).

CALL-AND-RESPONSE AS A CREATIVE RESOURCE:
ONE ELEMENT IN A SET OF MUSICAL FACTORS

My thesis is that in order to grasp the musical significance of call-and-response, we should consider it within a musical system that mixes and matches well-known ingredients. By structuring singers into the three performance roles of (1) leader/cantor, (2) group/chorus, and (3) leader-group together,[7] call-and-response serves as a disciplining framework for form, melody, rhythm, tonality, and sonority. As detailed below, these musical factors blend together in songs that have an overall stylistic consistency, yet individual musical identity. Call-and-response is one member in a set of interactive factors that may be observed in Agbadza songs.

Factor of Distribution of Text and Tune among Performers

In Agbadza songs, call-and-response functions as a way of distributing text and tune among the performers. Agbadza songs are not designed to be sung by one person alone. On the contrary, the musical sociability between song leaders and singing group is central to the experience of Agbadza and establishes the basic condition for musical form. In Ewe performance practice, a song's lead part is handled by a formally designated song leader and several assistant song leaders. The song leader is responsible for selecting and starting a song. Once the song is underway, the song leader may rest while the assistant song leaders take over the active role of singing the lead part. The song leader part lifts the melody up, putting it in motion for the hand-off to the larger chorus whose words and tune may echo, amplify, or comment upon the leaders' message. The timing of this switch in

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[7] When writing the lyrics, Alorwoyie would only mark leader and group, but not those words that may be sung together by both at the discretion of the leader. In contrast, I prefer to mark as "All" these passages of potential collaboration because it makes visually evident an aspect of form and texture that an enculturated Ewe expert takes for granted.

texture and volume from the "light" sound of one or two voices in the lead part to the "heavy" sound of many voices in the group part is a core feature of every song's rhythm. In the case of the Alorwoyie Agbadza recordings, the assistant song leaders reinforce the song leader's musical lines, often thickening the leader's monophonic texture with melodic intervals at certain important moments in the song.

Factor of Form

Melody and lyrics are set within the exchange of phrases among parts for Lead, Group and All in many different ways. The form of call-and-response is a resource that confers a distinct aesthetic personality upon a song (see Table 1 and Table 2). In some songs, a musically complete phrase by the leader is answered with a similarly whole phrase by the group (see item 9). In others, a complete melodic idea requires the hand-off of melodic fragments between leader and group (see item 13). The length of the song lyrics determines formal design. Short poems provide an opportunity for rapid trading of phrases, whereas longer poems enable development of contrasting musical sections. Frequently, a song opens with a section of longer phrases in smoothly flowing rhythm; next comes a passage whose call-and-response moves in shorter phrases with more percussive rhythmic quality; lastly, leader and group join together to close the song with material drawn from its first section (see items 4, 5, 10, 11, 18, 19, 20, 22).

Two types of musical form describe these twenty-five tunes: (1) linear progressive form and (2) ternary rounded form (see Table 1).[8] In twelve songs, the overall tune is

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[8] In column B, a cohesive melodic unit receives its own capital letter, with its constituent shorter phrases identified with a number. Linear form is thus marked with one letter only, but also includes a sequence of numbers. Rounded form is marked ABA, but is typically expanded to show phrases within each lettered section. Hyphens are correlated to the marking of call-and-response in column C. In column C, the letters L, G, and A mark material sung respectively by Leader, Group, and All (leader and group together).

created from phrases exchanged by leader and group without repeats or reprises (see items 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 21, 23, 24). Another twelve songs have some type of return: three songs begin with two contrasting sections of call-and-response and then close with a reprise of material from the opening section that may be sung together by all the singers (items 2, 11, 16); while nine songs extend the middle portion of the song with additional melodic material (items 4, 5, 10, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22). Song 25 is a unique hybrid of an oft-repeated part A in linear form, followed by a second oft-repeated part B in linear form, followed by one occurrence of the tune from part A.

The length of songs varies greatly. As shown in Table 1, nine songs are four bell cycles long, but no other duration is shared by more than two songs. Short songs have a drone-like tonal quality and insistent drum-like rhythm (see items 13 and 21). In comparison, longer songs have memorable tunes. In medium-length songs of four to eight bell cycles in duration, leader and group usually exchange complementary phrases. Typically, the leader's phrase lies within a higher register and ends without achieving rhythmic or tonal closure; the group's phrase lowers the tune towards the final pitch, which usually occurs in four-feel beats one or two. Longer songs feature more repetition of phrases than do medium-length songs and extended sectional form that affords the introduction of new textual and musical material. No matter what their duration, songs tend to have downward melodic motion both in terms of the progression of tessitura and phrase finals, as well as direction of melodic intervals.

Hyphens are correlated to the marking of melodic form in column B. In column D, the duration of a song is measured in the number of time spans of the bell phrase. Item 25 is marked "not appropriate" because its duration is dependent upon the impromptu decisions of the lead singer about how many times to repeat its two separate parts 25.1 and 25.2.

The social nature of Agbadza singing creates opportunities for composers to distribute a tune's phrases between song leader and singing group in many different ways. A sense of the formal and melodic variety in these songs emerges when call-and-response and melodic forms are combined. Eight types of "nuanced" form emerge from this more complex analysis (see Table 2).

Table 1. Agbadza songs: musical form, call-and-response, and duration in bell cycles

item	melodic form	call-and-response	bell cycles
1	Linear: A1-A2-B1	LG-LG-A	4
2	Rounded: A1-B1-A2	LG-L-G	4
3	Linear: A1-A2	LG-LG	4
4	Rounded: A1-A2-B1-A3	LG-LG-A-A	16
5	Rounded: A1-A1-B1-B2-A1	LG-LG-LG-LG-A	23
6	Linear: A1-A2	L-G	4
7	Linear: A1-A2	L-G	4
8	Linear: A1-A2-A3	LG-LG-A	4
9	Linear: A1-A2	L-G	8
10	Rounded: A1-A2-A3-B1-A4	LG-LG-A-A-A	10
11	Rounded: A1A2-A1A2-B1-A2	LG-LG-A-A	14
12	Rounded: A1A2-A1A2-B1B2-C1-A2	LG-LG-LG-LG-A-A	9
13	Linear: A1-A2	LG-LG	2
14	Linear: A1-A2-A3	LG-LG-A	6
15	Linear: A1-A2-A3-A4	L-G-L-G	4
16	Linear: A1-A2-A1	LG-LG-A	6
17	Rounded: A1A2-A1A2-B1B2-A2	LG-LG-LG-LG-A	14
18	Rounded: A1A2-A1A2-B1B2-A1A2	LG-LG-LG-LG-AA	19
19	Rounded: A1-A2-B1-C1-A1	LG-LG-A-A-A	13
20	Rounded: A1-A2-B1-B2-A3	LG-LG-A-A-A	12
21	Linear: A1-A2	LG-LG	4
22	Rounded: A1A2-A1A2-B1B2-A1A2	LG-LG-LG-LG-A	16
23	Linear: A1-A2	L-G	4
24	Linear: A1-A2-A3-A4	LG-LG-A-A	8
25	Linear: A1A2A3-A4	LLL-G	na

Table 2. Agbadza songs: melody types with call-and-response

1.	Leader sings a melodically complete phrase; Group sings another melodically complete phrase (four songs, items 6, 7, 9, 23).
2.	Leader and Group alternate twice to make one complete melodic unit (one song, item 15).
3.	Leader and Group alternate phrases to make a first complete melodic unit and alternate again to make a second complete melodic unit (three songs, items 3, 13, 21).
4.	Leader sings three phrases in melodic sequence; Group responds with one phrase that completes the progression (one song, item 25; compare to item 10, which also repeats its opening phrase three times).
5.	Leader and Group alternate to complete a melodic idea; Leader sings a new idea; Group sings a new phrase that reprises the first section (one song, item 2).
6.	Leader and Group alternate to complete a melodic idea; this happens again to make a second complementary melodic phrase; then Group (or All) sings a third phrase that completes the tune (three songs, items 1, 8, 14).
7.	Leader and Group alternate phrases to complete a first section; they alternate again to complete a second section; then Group (or All) sings two or three additional sections (seven songs, items 16, 24, 4, 11, 10, 20, 19).
8.	Leader and Group alternate phrases to complete a first section; they alternate again to complete a second section; then Group (or All) reprise from opening section (four songs, items 5, 17, 22, 18).
9.	Leader and Group combine to sing two sections twice each; then Group (or All) adds a new section before singing reprise from opening section (one song, item 12).

Factor of Rhythm

Rhythm in song—a multifaceted musical domain of call-and-response, duration of phrases, patterns of accentuation, the motion of time values in rhythmic figures, and interaction with instruments of the ensemble—is as cleverly designed as rhythm in drumming. As ever in Ewe music, its duet with the bell phrase is a core feature of a song's rhythm. The rhythmic setting of a song's words is preset and shared by all singers. As already mentioned, the musical rhythm of the switch in "textural weight" from the sound of one or two lead voices to the sound of the group's many voices is a core feature of every song. Call-and-response form also dramatizes the other facets of a song's rhythm.

Each song has a strong rhythmic personality. Through their use of time values and the nature of their melodic movement, some songs consistently accentuate one time-feel; for example, song 13 strongly articulates on-beat six-feel time by its use eighths and quarters and the timing of its pitch changes (see song 23 for a song "in four"). More commonly, composers artfully shift between consistently accentuated time-feels. For example, song 12 is entirely "in six" until it surprisingly shifts to an "in four" feeling in order to musically dramatize the poem's comparison of male and female death. The song returns to six-feel time at the reprise of the opening section.

Rather than this type of consistent articulation of one time-feel, most songs move more freely among layers of the metric matrix or else have timing that readily can be felt in several meters simultaneously (Locke 2011). Rhythmic figures drawn from the bell phrase are a ready source of rhythmic ideas in songs, as is the 3:2 ratio between quarters and dotted-quarters in its many phrasing shapes. Song rhythm may articulate displacements of four-feel or six-feel beats.

The location of the beginnings and ends of phrases within the ensemble's cyclic matrix-like temporal framework is highly variable. As is true of lead drum phrases, the most frequent position for a phrase to start is four-feel beat three, followed in order by beats two, one and four. On the other hand, the final note of most phrases occurs within four-feel beat one, followed in frequency by beats two, four, and three. Interestingly, more phrases end on the second twelve-pulse (time-point 1.2) than on pulse one (time-point 1.1 or ONE).[9]

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[9] Data on phrase entrances are 128 for beat three, 84 for beat two, 58 for beat one, and 24 for beat four. Data on phrase finals are 154 for beat one, 70 for beat two, 59 for beat four and 44 for beat three. Phrase finals within beat one are 43 directly on the first partial (1.1) and 84 on the second partial (1.2).

Factor of Melody

Call-and-response organization not only highlights a song's rhythmic design, it also contributes to the presentation of a song's tune. The melodies of Agbadza songs conform to intervallic structures found in pentatonic scales. In other words, a tune makes only three consecutive "steps" (seconds) in ascent or descent before it "leaps" an interval of a third or greater. Other characteristic melodic action in these songs includes steps or leaps away from and back to a pitch, descending or ascending motion via interlocking leap-step figures, successive leaps, or step-leap sequences (Nketia 1963, 43–47). Pitch classes outside the five-item set of a pentatonic scale may be used as a means to create melodic sequence or to enable cadential motion toward a new tonal center. I would argue, however, that melodic motion remains pentatonic in character even if a song has more than five pitch classes (Dor 2000, 108 ff.).

Factor of Scale and Mode

Songs in this collection conform to two basic types of scales: (1) five pitches without a minor second interval (semitone), i.e., anhemitonic pentatonic scale (see Figure 2), and (2) five pitches with a minor second interval (semitone), i.e., hemitonic pentatonic scale (Figure 3); two different hemitonic scales may be found in this collection of Agbadza songs. In any given song, certain scale degrees serve as pitches of tonal instability and melodic action. When scale degrees are weighted with this information about their melodic and tonal functions, we find different modes in both types of scale. The organization of call-and-response often coordinates with other musical factors to accomplish and dramatize a shift in the "tonicity," so to speak, of a scale degree.

**Figure 2.** Agbadza songs: modes of anhemitonic pentatonic scale

AP Mode I

AP Mode II

AP Mode III

AP Mode IV

AP Mode V
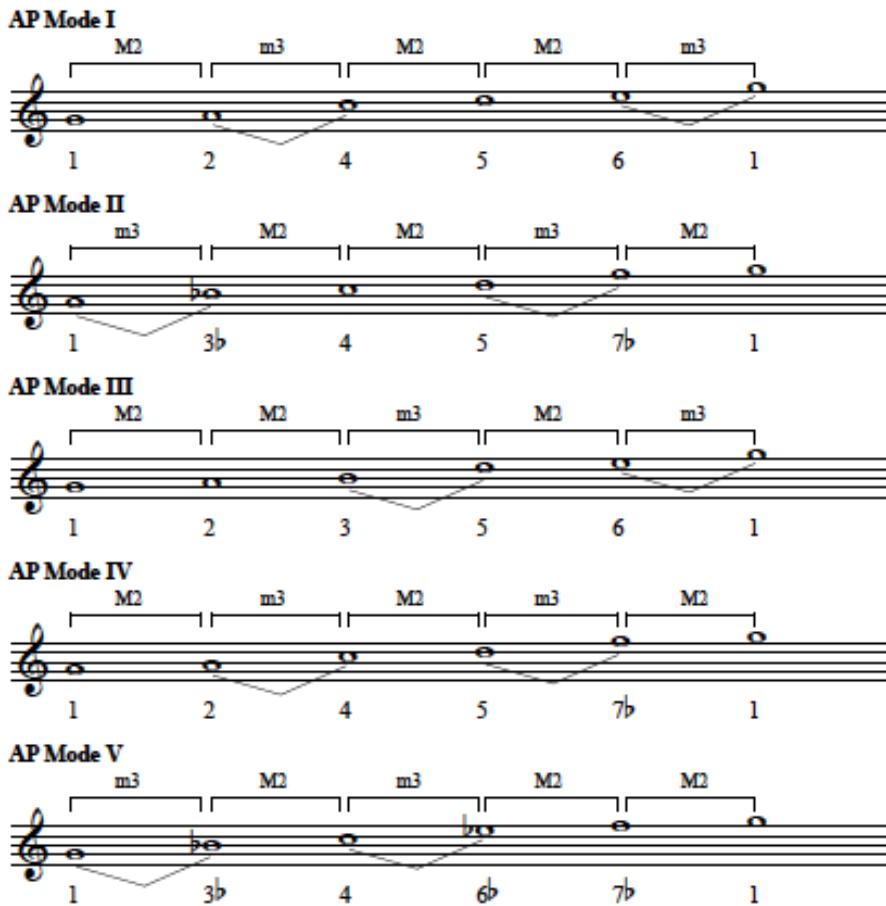
Figure 3. Agbadza songs: modes of hemitonic pentatonic scales

HP Scale A mode I

HP Scale A mode II

HP Scale B mode I

17
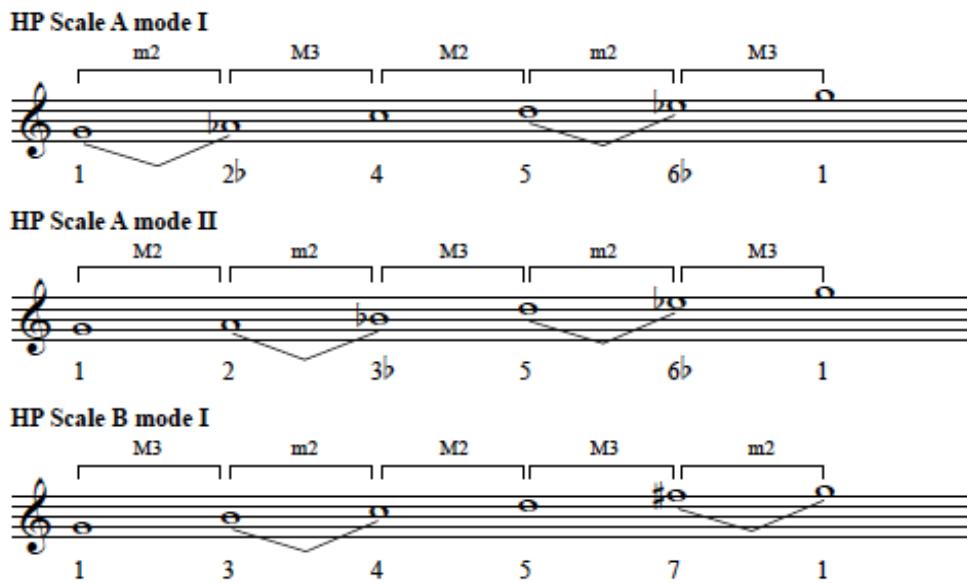
Factors of Register, Tonality and Sonority

Register is an important resource in the construction of melody. Tunes range over a gamut of an octave plus a fourth, allowing composers to craftily use tessitura and the progression of tonal centers to reinforce the musical form established by call-and-response and poetic lyrics. Long melodic lines, sometimes lasting over several bell cycles, are built from shorter phrases whose notes are limited to a modest portion of the overall range of pitches (i.e., trichordal, tetrachordal and pentachordal frames). Although triadic melodic and tonal relationships sometimes occur—for example, E♭-G-B♭-D (see item 23)—the melodies more frequently build on fourths and fifths. Typically, a tune begins toward the upper end of the song's gamut of pitches and works downward to a low pitch that usually feels like the overall tonal center. In the majority of songs, the tune never descends below the low tonic but six songs do explore the lower end of the range (items 2, 6, 9, 10, 19, 23).

Just as many features of drum ensemble music defy one-dimensional interpretation, the tonality of these songs frequently can be heard in several different ways. The pentatonic scalar structure means that any of five pitch classes can serve as a resting place of melodic motion. To my ear, the final note of the whole tune exerts powerful tonal gravity over the entire song. The most frequent competitor to G as a song's overall tonal center is A, which often has sufficient tonal pull to function as a competing tonal center. Significantly, tonal gravity is not a strong force in most songs due to pentatonic melodic action and repetition of the tune as a whole.

A progression of tonal centers reinforces a song's musical design. Motion between tonal goals is an important component to the melodic identity of any particular song. At

the level of phrase, a song's pentatonic modality results in goal-oriented melodic motion toward pitches separated at pitch intervals of seconds, thirds, fourths and fifths. However, since Agbadza songs are rather short and always are repeated, the tonal stasis of the final phrase is short-lived and quickly followed by another trip through the tune's phrases. Tunes that do not end on a tonicized pitch feel propelled forward into the song's next iteration (items 2, 4, 12). Songs with longer ABA forms often modulate upward during the shorter second section before reestablishing the tonal feeling of the song's first section in the closing reprise.

The Ewe predilection for thickening a melodic line further complicates a song's sense of tonal center and consequent tonal function of its modal degrees. Although simultaneous notes (harmony) often arise from contrapuntal motion that seems melodic in origin, singers' note choices when varying the tune are influenced by a pitch class's impact on the overall sonority of the vocal music. In other words, a singer may design a melodic variation in order to achieve a particular simultaneous interval with a pitch class in the main tune. Singers often create parallel melodic phrases at the interval of a fourth or fifth, which may require use of pitches not in the song's main pentatonic mode. Just as many features of the drum ensemble music are multidimensional, the tonality of these songs frequently can be heard in several different ways simultaneously (see Locke 2009).

ILLUSTRATING THE SYSTEM: ANALYSIS OF THREE SONGS

Let us now consider the musical use of call-and-response in three songs from the twenty-five items in the Alorwoyie-Locke Agbadza project.[10] After discussing the

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[10] An "item" of Agbadza music includes a poem, a tune, the polyrhythmic texture of an ensemble of idiophones and membranes, and a composition for lead and response drums. In performance, singers vary

message that Alorwoyie intends the item to convey, I will show how call-and-response

serves to structure a song's musical design and highlight its musical appeal. Before we

begin, a note on the semantic content is in order. Below, excerpts from my ethnographic

interviews with Alorwoyie present the meaning of song lyrics and drum language in his

own words. Like many other features of Ewe music, the meaning of Agbadza's poetic

texts seems designed to have multiple interpretations. Because I am not a fluent Ewe

speaker, I must rely on colleagues for translation. Readers fluent in the language and

knowledgeable about the cultural history of the Ewe people are likely to suggest

alternative nuances to the Alorwoyie's views. The translations given here are preferred by

Prof. Alorwoyie.

Song 3: Kua ve mí dada kue

Figure 4 Lead sheet of song 3: *Kua Ve Mí Dada Kue*

the tune and the lead drummer improvises on the theme of the composition. There are, in other words,
preset and spontaneous aspects to the "musical object," so to speak.

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Song Lyrics

Leader	*Kua ve mí dada kue*	This death hurts us, war leader, death.
Group	*Gae ɖɔ 'hɔ̃ vɛ*	A person is trying to cause war.
	Kua ve mí hɛɛ	Death hurts us, yes.
Leader	*Kua ve mí dada*	Death hurts us, war leader,
	Kua ve mí hɛɛ	Death hurts us, yes.
Group	*Gae ɖɔ 'hɔ̃ vɛ*	A person is trying to cause war.
	Kua ve mí hoo	Death hurts us, yes.

Drum Language

Lead	*Avlime, nyagã ko nyagã ko nyagã*	An old lady who has passed on to the world of the dead.
Response	*Nyagã ko nyagã ko nyagã*	Old lady, old lady, old lady.

Alorwoyie's Message

As you can see from the tone of the song, when people die, it is painful. During those former wars, there are strong women who go into the battle area to provide food to their husbands and others. Some women are born to be real warriors; if you are not a warrior, you cannot go to the battlefield. The song says that a very strong woman has lost her life and now, as she goes through death, she knows what death is about. All people die, but she is the one who has gone to be buried, so now she will know what death is. The song says that only when you go into the grave will you know what death is about. You can talk of death but when you die actually, then you will know the difference between life and death. No one dies and then comes back and tells us how death is. It is never done. When you die, it is only you who will know the consequences of death.

Analysis

In its broad patterns this tune is quite uniform: the call-and-response is simple alternation (L-G-L-G), the phrases all are one bell phrase in duration, the text repeats almost exactly with only slight addition in the second leader's phrase, the tonality is straightforwardly anhemitonic pentatonic (1-2-3-5-6, G-A-B-D-E), the melody builds on the affinity between D-G and unambiguously affirms G as its tonal center, and the tune's melodic motion is always descending. So how did the composer make the song musically interesting? With rhythm.

The melodic phrases begin on four-beat three and move over the barline toward conclusion within four-beats one and/or two; in other words, they push against the bell's inherent three-four-one cadence to ONE. Both leader and group move over the second half of the bell phrase "in six," which puts them in 3:2 ratio with the four-beats three and four but in unison with the handclap part. The group's tune, on the other hand, always accentuates four-beats one and two, which puts it in 2:3 ratio with the handclap. The most sophisticated rhythmic action is in the leader's part. In the first phrase, the placement of notes on twelve-pulses twelve and two in mm. 1 and 2 creates a shift in the rhythmic flow from the on-beat six-beats to the upbeat six-beats; alternatively, if the listener's mental orientation stays "in four," the notes on G5 and E5 mark for emphasis the third time-points in four-beats three and four, while the D4 within four-beat one in m. 2 falls on twelve-pulse two, a position between bell strokes that is the structurally weakest moment in the measure. Put differently, the leader syncopates the last word in the phrase ("kue"), dragging it off twelve-pulse one to a delayed position on twelve-pulse two. In the leader's second phrase, the added text set on twelve-pulses twelve, two and four enables the tune

to build on the upbeat six flow that had been hinted at in the leader's first phrase; or, if listeners stay "in four," they can feel accentuation of second time-points within four-beats three, four, one, and two (E5-D-D5-G4) that suggest displacement of the normal position of the four-feel beats. These subtle rhythmic possibilities in the leader's part are countered and resolved by the group's steady accentuation of the onbeat moments within four-beats one and two.

Song 4: Mekua menye ŋukpe o

Figure 5. Lead sheet of song 4: *Mekua menye ŋukpe o*

Figure 5 *(continued)*

Song Lyrics

Leader	*Mekua menye ŋukpe o*	If I die, it is no shame.
	Ne meku dzogbe kua	If I die on the battlefield,
	Menye ŋukpe o	It is without shame.
	Agbe ŋu manye ya wo xɔnye hɛɛ	The unexpected happened to my friend.
Group	*Aha mano fia adã*	I will drink and challenge you.
	Agbe ŋu manye ya wo xɔnye hoo	The unexpected happened to my friend.
	(repeat from beginning)	(repeat from beginning)
All	*Aŋlɔ Klotsie fo adegbe*	The Anlo state boasts.
	Agbe ŋu manye ya wo xɔnye hɛɛ	The unexpected happened to my friend.
	Aha mano fia adã	I will drink and challenge you.
	Agbe ŋu manye ya wo xɔnye hoo	The unexpected happened to my friend.

Drum Language

A	Lead	*Nɔ anyi nɔ anyi nɔ anyi,*	Sit sit sit,
		Nɔ anyi nɔ anyi	Sit sit
B	Lead	*Adewuto, míekpe vɔ, míekpe vɔ*	Adewuto, by all means we will meet.
	Response	*Míekpe vɔ, míekpe vɔ*	We will meet.

Alorwoyie's Message

This is a warrior's issue. Let us say that David is known as a youth leader, a strong leader. When he and I meet, he talks gently, but when he goes back to his own people, he talks strongly about his power. I get to know. I invite David to come and have a drink with me. I say, "Anytime we meet, you act like you are stronger than me or that you can overpower my spirit. Today we sit down together. Let us show our power." At that point, I show him my power. David only thought I was inviting him to have a drink, not knowing that because of what he has been saying, I want to get him close so that both of us can fight and we can see who is the winner. In the song, *Adewuto* thought that the friend has invited him on a friendly basis to share a drink, not knowing that it is going to be a battle. This is a good example of putting things together. After I listened to the song, I knew which drum pattern to put with it. Here is the man, *Adewuto*. He had been saying that if he meets his enemy, he is going to get rid of him. He claimed to be stronger, but it ended up that the other guy has killed him.

Analysis

This is one of the "long form" songs in the collection in which a relatively lengthy poem is set to a tune with several sections that are arranged in a comparatively elaborate call-and-response format within a rounded ABA form. Within the field of Ewe music as a

whole, songs like this are common. The leader's relatively long melodic line (mm. 1–4) can be heard as two phrases: the first begins at high pitch and ends with a sense of temporary stasis on D5 in m. 3; the second arches upward before descending to G4. The group answers with an upward move, a pause on D5 in m. 5, followed by a terraced descent with slight pauses on E5 and D5. Significantly, the phrase final of group's tune is A4, not the G4 that would convey the sense of tonal resolution we might expect. In the repeat of this section of the poem, the group's arching melody falls back only to D5. In terms of the tonal logic of Ewe song, we can say that the group heralds the advent of the tune's next section by remaining within the song's upper tessitura. When factoring in both melody and text, the form of the two call-and-response interactions in this section is A1A2. In notation A1 lies within mm. 1–6; A2 begins in m. 6, repeats mm. 2–4 and then takes the second ending to 7 and 8.

In comparison to other "long form" songs in the collection, the subsequent B section is modest in duration and design (mm. 8–10): the tune explores the high pitch area with pendular seconds and a downward leap, before borrowing from the leader's A section material in a descent to G4. At this point in the song's form, an enculturated listener would expect leader and group to join together to reprise material from the A section, either with an exact repeat of the opening section's melody or a slight modification. Call-and-response provides a creative opportunity for the composer to choose whether to bring back (1) the full alternation between leader and group, (2) just the leader's part, or (3) just the group's part. In this case, the singers repeat the group's phrase from the opening section.

Song 18: *Mɔxe ŋue bla gbadza nyitsɔ*

Figure 6. Lead sheet of song 18: *Mɔxe ŋue bla gbadza nyitsɔ*

Figure 6. *(continued)*

Song Lyrics

Leader	*Mɔxe ŋue bla gbadza nyitsɔ*	Mɔxe himself wrapped on his war belt the other day.
	Toka me loa le ye loo	How did the crocodile grab him?
Group	*Oo Mɔxe ŋue bla gbadza*	Mɔxe himself wrapped on his war belt.
	Toka me loa le ye loo	How did the crocodile grab him?
	(repeat from beginning)	(repeat from beginning)
Leader	*Míayi avadadawo gbɔ*	We will go to the war leaders' place
Group	*Ne woadzi tu kplẽ kpe*	To get guns and bullets
	Ne woawu loa na ye loo	To kill the crocodile for him.
	(repeat above)	(repeat above)
All	*Mɔxe ŋue bla gbadza nyitsɔ*	Mɔxe himself wrapped on his war belt the other day.
	Toka me loa le ye loo hoo	How did the crocodile grab him?
	Oo Mɔxe ŋue bla gbadza	Mɔxe himself wrapped his war belt.
	To ka me loa le ye loo	How did the crocodile grab him?

Drum Language

A	Lead	*Koko, koko, koko*	By all means,
		Naɖo ŋku dzie, naɖo ŋku dzie	Remember [what happened to Mɔxe].
B	Lead	*'Fike neto hafi avakalẽawo gbɔ*	Wherever you have gone before the warriors return,
		Naɖo ŋku dzie, naɖo ŋku dzie	Remember, remember.
	Response	*Do edzi, do edzi, do edzi*	Remind yourself,
		Naɖo ŋku dzie, naɖo ŋku dzie	Remember [what happened to Mɔxe].

Alorwoyie's Message

Mɔxe, one of the war leaders, has prepared himself very well for war. Just as he was to go, an amazing surprise came for him: he was taken by a crocodile! The issue for the song composer is that despite all *Mɔxe's* spiritual preparation, his enemies proved to him that there are people with more power. Instead of his enemies coming physically, they sent a crocodile and that was the end of him. The message is that no matter whatever you do and whatever you are thinking, everything that happens has power from the Almighty. When you die, then what? You don't have the power: the power is from Almighty God. This song and drumming just remind you that whatever you do, the power is in God's hands.

Analysis

Unlike the previously discussed songs, the tonality of this song uses minor seconds in a pentatonic scale pattern in the mode 1-♭2-4-5-♭6, here set on D (and not G) to avoid ledger lines. The song begins with equivalent musical settings of the same text: the Leader's call that is set in the higher end of the pitch range—ending on the fifth modal degree—is answered by the Group's descent to the low tonic of the hemitonic scale. This section repeats, yielding an A1A2 A1A2 formal design (A1, sung by the song leader, lies

within mm. 1-3; A2, sung by the singing group, lies within mm. 3–5, and m. 6 when sung

for the second time). The next section (B, mm. 6–11) adheres to very typical Ewe practice

in "long form" songs: the tessitura shifts upward, melodic motion fits within a narrower

compass, rhythms are more percussive in character, phrases are shorter overall, Leader

and Group parts are imbalanced in duration, and distributed in call-and-response manner.

At the end of the second rendition in m. 13 the Group response comes to rest on the fifth

modal degree (D), which invites a reprise of the entire A section by All. If we blend the

factors of text and tune together with the call-and-response arrangement, the song's form

can be marked A1A2 A1A2 B1B2 A1A2. Call-and-response frames and dramatizes the

song's melodic action: working higher in the gamut, the Leader's part feels exiting and

motile in comparison to the Group's response, which provides stability and resolution.

CONCLUSION

The oral version of this paper was presented at the 2012 meeting of the Society for

Music Theory that was held jointly with the Society for Ethnomusicology and the

American Musicological Society. In the Seeger Lecture delivered to the Society for

Ethnomusicology, Portia Maultsby recommended that intercultural music scholars adopt

"culture-emerging" analytic paradigms (Kartomi 1990, 12–14). To paraphrase, Maultsby

urged us to "get to know the music itself and the people who make that music so that over

time appropriate categories of analysis suggest themselves." I have tried to follow this

injunction here. Applied within an intercultural discourse whose participants do not share

the same analytic language, these theoretical tools were not forced arbitrarily onto

Agbadza songs; on the contrary, analytic elements arose from my long-term, close

encounter with the music. My writing and graphics strive to be natural not only to the music-culture of the Ewe "source" tradition but also to the cosmopolitan "target" music-cultures who would seek to know it. While articulating musical complexity, the analytic apparatus itself tries to be relatively simple and transparent. The paper can be understood as a mediation of Agbadza music for an international audience, an act of translation.

The purpose of good song-making among the Ewe is to join language and music so that listeners "get" the meaning and "feel" the affect (Locke 1992, 183). In Agbadza songs, call-and-response between parts for Leader, Group, and All is an important component of a multifaceted musical system built to accomplish this mission. The goal of this paper has been to show that call-and-response is a powerful tool that frames song lyrics in a clear fashion and helps to socially dramatize musical factors that set the words in a memorable and expressive manner.

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