
THE CONSTRUCTION AND MANIPULATION OF TEMPORAL STRUCTURES IN *YEVE* CULT MUSIC: A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL APPROACH*

by

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In the past quarter-century, Western art music tradition has seen some major advances in the analysis of the phenomenon of time in music. However, the quantitative and objective approach to time remains a hallmark of Western analytical perspectives. Also, recent radical turns which adopt phenomenological and subjective approaches hardly escape the influence of the myopic and so-called objective approach.¹ With regard to the Black African continent, studies relating to musical time have consequently been modelled along the objective and quantitative tradition, although remarkable achievements have been made in the psychological, philosophical, and anthropological studies of time in African cultures in general.² The urgency of the need to attend to qualitative and multi-dimensional aspects of musical time cannot, therefore, be overstressed, as demonstrated by Ruth Stone in her new manuscript on time in African music.³ My special concern for the qualitative dimension rests on the assumption that the universal phenomenon of time transcends the qualitative and quantitative modes by which we apprehend and organise our daily activities and experiences, including music-making.

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to investigate in detail how musical time is arrived at, and how it interacts with and is influenced by social events and by the specific context under which the music is performed. The analysis will be based upon examples from *Yeve* cult music as practised among the Anlo-Ewe of Ghana. In addition, the paper will examine relationships that exist between the individual or composite (musical and extra-musical) temporal structures and participants' affective response. The affective or experiential domain will also include audience response⁴.

The *Yeve* cult

The *Yeve* (also known as *Xebieso*, *Hū*, or *Təhono*) is a thunder-god, a pantheon with historical relations to the Yoruba *Shango* and the Dahomean *Xevioso*.⁵ The cult is one of the most 'powerful' and most secretive among others that exist in the Ewe society (Anlo-Ewe specifically). Formal initiation rites take place after candidates have undergone prolonged, intense and secret training and instruction in dance, music, and manners of conduct and behaviour. A neophyte (referred to as a *Hūsikpɔkɔ* or *Sodzemadogo*) is often identified by his/her typical costume, restricted social or secular participation, and the secret language spoken throughout the novitiate.⁶ Membership in the cult depends upon several factors some of which include unusual event or life crisis, forced membership as a punitive measure for an offence committed, the reincarnation of a dead member, and upon the 'gods' own free calling.⁷ The 'separation' and 'secrecy' involved in the *Yeve* cult are further demonstrated in the specific terms that are used. For example, a member of the cult is

referred to as ‘*Hūsi*’ or ‘*Yevesi*’; while a non-member in the public domain is called ‘*Ahevi*’.⁸ Furthermore, a *Hūsi* would caution an *Ahevi* who inquired about *Yeve* practices in the following phrase: “*Ahevi mekpɔ Yeve me o*” (i.e. A non-initiate does not probe into what goes on in *Yeve*).

The secular public also observe specific rules and regulations in order to maintain the ‘purity’ of the *Hūsi*. For example, if wounded, slapped on the cheek or made to eat certain forbidden food items, the *Hūsi* is consequently ‘defiled’ and must run ‘wild’ until appropriate purification rites are performed.⁹ The same situation is applicable if the former (i.e. pre-membership) name of a *Hūsi* is called accidentally or willfully. Members of the public (*Aheviwo*) cannot sing *Yeve* songs at will, and even initiates do not sing or perform the music out of the regular contexts.

The official functional hierarchy includes the priest (*Hūbonɔ* or *Midao*) and priestess (*Minao*). Other subordinate titles include the ritual flagellant (*Katidao*), male and female leaders, *Dzidao*, and so on. Performances can occupy a day, three days, or more, depending upon the type and significance of the occasion.

The music, dance and costume

As an integral component of the ritual, *Yeve* music is quite distinct from all other Ewe musical genres, although much of it is constructed within the general Anlo-Ewe musical traditions.¹⁰ The total *Yeve* musical repertoire is generally described as a suite (using the Western term) involving up to nine dance forms.¹¹ The types and number of dance forms played depend upon the significance and type of occasion involved. The major dance forms in the repertoire include *Hūsago* (introductory piece), *Afɔvu*, *Sogba*, *Sovu*, *Adavu* (for heightened spiritual experience), and *Avlevu* (as a comic relief). While the sequence of these dances is fixed (e.g. *Adavu* followed by *Afɔvu*), the spatio-temporal placement of others depends upon such factors as temporal structure of the ritual, special request from the dancer, and level of tension generated.

The total corpus of *Yeve* songs can be divided into two categories: those sung in free rhythm but with strict time accompaniment, and those with highly organised rhythmic structure. However, there are a few *Yeve* songs in the strict time category which are sometimes sung in free rhythm. The first category (free rhythm) is referred to as ‘*Tsitrenuha*’ (lit., songs sung on foot) or ‘*Adaha*’ (lit., songs of fury), and this category is among those to receive emphasis during the analysis. To appreciate the significance of ‘free rhythm’ and the opposition of ‘free’ and ‘strict’ temporal events in the *Yeve* context, readers must be reminded that complex but tightly organised rhythmic framework is a hallmark of the general Anlo-Ewe musical traditions.¹²

A sound from nowhere

The initial musical event that alerts the public to an impending *Yeve* cult ritual is established in the following manner: the *Hūsiwo* (i.e., devotees or initiates) begin by singing, individually and/or in groups *Tsitrenuhawo* (i.e. free rhythm songs) as early as before cockcrow.¹³ Although information on cult activities is restricted, my personal analysis of events reveals that this ‘sudden’ or ‘deep time’ origin of the music is not accidental. The practice seems to confirm the total secrecy within which much of the cult procedure is shrouded.

Cockcrows which are heard at different intervals at dawn are a special designator of time which awakens people to possible personal or social activities. The decision to get

up from bed however remains a personal choice. It is, therefore, appropriate for the *Hūsi* (pl. *Hūsiwo*) to place the beginning of *Yeve* music out of public consciousness (i.e., that part of the night before cockcrow) in order to be consistent with the element of secrecy. A beginning that takes place after cockcrow would thus have given the *Ahevi* (i.e. non-initiate) an opportunity to observe and discover when and how *Yeve* music and ritual begin.¹⁴ The people thus find themselves suddenly awakened to the music. This element of surprise is also reinforced through the employment of special vocal and timbral techniques by the singers (*Hūsiwo*), including accented and abrupt final pitches, interjection of recited tones, and a high decibel level of singing. As regards the formal closing or ending of the music event, there seems to be no parallel practice. The termination is however signalled by a gradual fading (sporadic) of the singing into the night, sometimes finally ending around 10.45pm. In the context of funerary rights for a dead member during which moment many non-initiates (*Aheviwo*) are allowed participation, the rites and singing are formally closed by going into a lake or pool during the early part of the night. After terminating the events in this spatio-temporal (going to a certain place within a certain time frame) manner, not a note of *Yeve* song is sung thereafter. The nocturnal musical activity, therefore, represents a planned and graduated extension of the previous musical event in space and time.¹⁵ There are usually both morning and afternoon segments of the day's musical and ritual events.¹⁶ The significance of the night as a time of secret 'hidden' activities in most cultures of the world is here elaborated in the *Yeve* context.

Where is the beat?

Our second musical phenomenon to be examined in this segment of the analysis concerns *Tsitrenuhawo*, that is, the free rhythm songs with strict time accompaniment. As already stated, an important characteristic of this corpus of songs is the free rhythmic organisation. On the other hand, the songs are accompanied by a strictly organised and complex rhythmic background played on both double and single bells.¹⁷ Examples 1a and 1b illustrate the two types of accompaniment often employed:

Ex. 1a =ca. 130

Bell 1

2

3

Strict rhythmic accompaniment
based on peculiar pattern:
(tidintsa = mnemonic)
ti-din-tsa, ti-din-tsa

Example 1c represents the listener's attempt to synthesize and simplify the complex temporal and sound phenomenon occurring in Example 1b. What is perceived is,

however, far more complex than can be verbalized. However, the resultant pattern in mnemonics indicates the subtle timbral qualities that are essential to the listener's perception and qualitative response.¹⁹

Ex. 1b. More creative strict time accompaniment ♩ = ca. 98

Bell 1

2

3

4

(d = low bell, u = top bell of a double bell)

Ex. 1c¹⁸ Resultant pattern of 1b in mnemonic form

H
M
L

to-tro-gba tsi-ḡa-tsi-ḡa, to-tro-gba tsi-ḡa-tsi-ḡa

Another sonic event which interacts with the free rhythm song and its accompaniment regards the shaking of a special type of multiple clapper bell by the singer(s). As a rule, every *Hūsi* owns an *adodo*, as the multiple bell is called. The *adodo* can be shaken (not really conceived of as a regular musical instrument which must be 'played') either intermittently as fancied, or as a continuous stream of sound. On major ritual occasions, the *Hūsi* is hardly ever seen without the *adodo*, except for a brief moment when she/he has to dance. When the *adodo* is shaken in that continuous fashion, one sometimes perceives an apparent or temporary rhythmic regularity, as depicted below:



However, in the context of a group (i.e. several persons doing the shaking at the same time), this pseudo-rhythmic regularity assumes a different sonic-temporal dimension. The reason is that not everybody shakes the *adodo* at the same frequency, and a clean synchronized sound frame is not their goal. The peculiar tone cluster that results from shaking the *adodo* (individually or in group) is the main element thus manipulated to

underscore the symbolic importance of the *adodo* in *Yeve* rituals. It can also be described as part of the total panoply of status-defining objects worn or carried by the *Hūsiwo*. Examples 2a & 2b illustrate a free rhythm song with and without accompaniment, respectively:

Ex. 2a *Tsitrenuha* with strict time accompaniment

♩ = ca. 92

Voices (Free Rhythm) Nye'g me nyae be ko-dzo-gbea lea wo le So-da- la gba - na,

Bell

1

2

3

4

So-da-la tra dzo.

Ex. 2b *Tsitrenuha* without accompaniment (after Fiagbedzi)

In free rhythm

[a] E-hu-vivo, [b] mi-nya afe na-m dee. [c] Tsoe-de-ba

fe vi-woe, [c²] To-fa fe vi-woe, [b¹] mi-nya afe na-m

Ex. 2b contd.

[b²] Mi-nya afe na wõe-dza-ka na ḍo. [d] Tsiwo-ze nue
 ma-fiã-wõe a. [a] Hu-viwo ee, mi-nya afe na-m hee.
 [a] Ye-ve-tɔ-woe, [b] mi-nya afe na-m hee. [a] Hu-vi-woe,
 mi-nya afe na-m hee. [c] Tsoe-ḍe-ba fe vi-woe, [c³] Hu-wɔ
 fe vi-wo, [b²] mi-nya axoe na ḍo [b²] mi-nya afe na wõe-dza
 ka na ḍo [d] Tsiwo-ze nue ma fia-woe.

We should also bear in mind that, within the *Yeve* musical repertoire, a large portion of the musical event contains songs that are sung in the normal strict rhythmic framework and with or without strict time accompaniment. The excerpt given below should clarify this situation:

Ex. 3 Excerpt from *Sovu* dance music

ca. 138

Voices
 Da wɔ-la-wo gbɔ-na Vo-du Da wɔ-la-wo gbɔ-na

Accomp.

Ex. 3 contd.

Ho- tsui- kpla-nya me-nye Da wo-la-wo ρ, Da wo-la-wo gba- na:

The complex temporal and sonic events (Ex. 2), therefore, present the listener-spectator with a shifting and conflicting phenomenon which we can easily describe as a 'sound-time maze'. However, in order to fully perceive and appreciate the subtleties of the overall musical event, one would need to integrate the sound framework within the total ritual atmosphere. The devotees (*Hūsiwo*), on major occasions (i.e. initiation, purification), wear diverse decorative and symbolic objects as part of the prescribed *Yeve* costume. The ritual context, the elaborate costume, the special dance movement, and the multi-dimensional aspect of the music combine to imbue the event with awe and suspense. While the song, the accompaniment, and the *adodo* present the audience with an unstable situation, the careful distancing of the *Hūsi* from the public (i.e. by observing additional rules of behaviour) serves to heighten public expectation, anxiety, and the general mystic atmosphere.²⁰

A detailed observation and analysis of the strict time accompaniment further reveals its psychological function which is necessary for a sustained and high-quality singing (remember that the song itself is in free rhythm). The accompaniment can be very creative for the sake of musical or aesthetic interests (e.g. see Ex. 1b). This creative aspect elicits attention from the listener, and evidence of this can be seen in the way members of the secular public go out to watch, with enthusiasm, the musical performance *in situ*, or the singing throughout the village. The accompaniment, due to its non-stop nature (except when singing has to cease for the purpose of attending to private transactions in the private room of another *Hūsi* or an affiliate member), constitutes a drive mechanism which encourages musical activity from the singer.²¹

The strict time accompaniment (known as '*gamamla*') therefore plays a very important role: it is an antidote against musical lethargy, a drive force whose constant presence and interesting musical characteristics facilitate a prolonged musical activity.²² Since the total ritual complex is inherently pervaded with energy (heightened emotional and physical involvement), it is therefore proper to construct types of music (sound and time) which would aid the overall momentum sought. The strict time accompaniment, the *Tsitrenuha*, and the *adodo* are therefore indispensable in this respect.

Playmates and the playful

The tension and high anxiety level generated within the foregoing events are

underscored and resolved partially and temporarily in a special aesthetico-dramatic feature known as *Avlewaw*. In contrast to the tense and rigid atmosphere which characterizes *Yeve* occasions, the cult tradition sanctions a limited number of initiates ('selected' by the god *Avleketi*, one among the pantheon) to put up comic or frivolous acts which sometimes seek to test the seriousness of other *Hūsiwo* during performances.²³ However, the *Avlesi* (as they are referred to, being devotees of the god *Avleketi*) hardly succeed in betraying the prescribed and rigidly patterned behaviour of the other initiates.

The *Avlesi* can be either female or male. The number of them in one *Yeve* cult house may range from one to three, but never more than the aggregate number of *Hūsiwo* who are not committed to the god *Avleketi*. The prescribed costume worn by the *Avlesi* differs significantly from the usual one. In order to accent their comic characteristics, female *Avlesiwo* would wear such secular items as hats, wrist watches, trousers and shoes. These items are never worn by other initiates during ritual occasions. In addition to the costume, the *Avlesi* also engages in stereotypic acts (e.g. clowning, funny verbal comments) which draw much laughter from the secular audience.²⁴

The importance of the *Avle* (or *Avlewaw*) in the overall performance dramaturgy is climaxed during the performance of their peculiar dance music known as *Avlevu* (the comic dance maneuvers are known as *Avlewaw*). The *Avlevu* can be described as a minor dance form in terms of its structural characteristics and when compared with other dance forms in the suite. While its place in the sequence is not as rigidly fixed as, for example, *Hūsago*, *Afuvu* and *Adavu* (see also Example 7, page 13), it is neither played close to the beginning nor the end of the total musical event.²⁵ Its normal spatio-temporal placement is found within the 'thick' of events, and at a time when it becomes necessary to dilute or resolve the tension, anxiety and expectations which have accumulated within the audience and the *Hūsiwo*.

The music of the *Avlevu* is tightly structured in relation to the peculiar dance movements of the *Avlesi*. The total movement pattern, which assumes a gradual acceleration in tempo, is a simulation of an erotic act with the aid of a stick which is manipulated as a phallus. As the music speeds up gradually in synchrony with the *Avlesi*'s movements, the audience's excitement and expectation gain momentum accordingly. The simulation culminates in a chaotic climax during which the *Avlesi*

Example 4, the *Avlevu*. The number of repeats depends upon dancer (*Avle*). The texts given are mnemonics.

Bell pattern $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 80$

Support drum $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 190$

Master drum $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 190$

A - v le - to - gba

kaḡ- ka na-du-du

Acceleration begins here

and ends at $\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 190.$

concludes through a vigorous and quick simulation of the act of copulation.

In lieu of a phallus, the *Avlesi* sometimes performs the climax of the simulation (i.e. copulation) with a sexual partner from the audience. However, the partner is normally caught unawares: the *Avlesi* predetermines in her mind who is to be the partner and without informing him.²⁶ The climax of the *Avlewɔwɔ* is also the moment in which the speed of the music is fastest, reaching approximately M.M. ♩ = 190 (see Ex. 4). Even at this great speed, the strict relationship or coordination that exists between the music and the *Avle* dance is never abandoned. Both the music and dance are therefore terminated at the same time, and the *Avlesi* runs back into the cult house. In the *Avlevu*, therefore, the comic enactment in space and time interrelates with the musical motion in order to qualify and structure audience response.

The rigidly structured ritual context is, therefore, not without traces of regular human qualities and needs, as encountered in the *Avlewɔwɔ*. The inbuilt artistic and psycho-aesthetic characteristics are clearly demonstrated through the reinterpretation and reorganisation of musical elements and human-social qualities in a context far removed from the public domain. The sense and essence inherent in *Yeve* ritual can only find their full realization when thus integrated in relation to audience pleasure and satisfaction.

The whole notion of *Avlewɔwɔ* within a highly secretive and patterned ritual context can also be understood from the perspective of the role of 'play' or 'ugly' in the eventual crystallization of psycho-aesthetic needs.²⁷ Purpose in *Yeve* ritual is not to always scare away the audience; the opposite is well-illustrated in the *Avlewɔwɔ*. In another dimension of analysis, such interplay of the comic and the serious describes a reversal of sacred time.²⁸ The comic aspect not only deepens the affective potential of the whole ritual drama, but it also diversifies and situates the audience (and the *Hūsiwo*) in different qualitative temporal planes through the strategic integration of *Avlewɔwɔ*.

Flowing garbs

Another phenomenon that yields further evidence on the aesthetic and temporal dimension regards the manipulation of a type of costume worn by male initiates on a specific day of the total ritual period. This costume, known as *avlaya*, is a type of skirt made up of several layers of cloth (with different designs). Due to the large number of cloth pieces involved, the skirt attains a height which allows the wearer's arms to rest on the top of the skirt making an angle of almost 90 degrees with the body.²⁹

The day on which the *avlaya* is worn is a significant one in terms of building climaxes. This costume, by its decorative and splendid nature, attracts attention and admiration from the public. The elegance of the *avlaya* is also displayed in the manner in which it is handled to accent dance movements. Or sometimes the wearer would occasionally sway himself around in order to project the elegance previously mentioned.³⁰

The role of this special costume is climaxed in the following manner: the wearers try to play upon audience imagination (hence their admiration, appreciation and satisfaction) by making them believe that they come out from the shrine with a new *avlaya* each time they retreat into it. What actually happens, as is known to a few members of the audience, is that after completing a dance with the *avlaya*, the dancer

retreats into the shrine. While in this secret environment, he slips one of the under pieces to become the top one (note that the pieces have different designs). Therefore when he appears again to dance with the new piece (but of the same *avlaya*) at the top, many people from the public believe that the dancer has put on a complete set of *avlaya*. Because one dancer may do this several times within the same dance music, the audience is thus driven to wonder how one person can own several such beautiful and huge (size is important) *avlayawo*³¹ The donning and manipulation of this costume during a specific time of the total performance, therefore, can be described as an intensification of qualitative involvement of the audience in time and space. In addition, it is a calculated extension of the total dramaturgy psycho-aesthetically.

Running in a circle

The *Yeve* musical repertoire includes a special dance form, *Adavu*, during which performance initiates demonstrate their heightened spiritual status in a unique manner.³² Although this dance form is played to support or indicate type and stage of ritual, it is only at this moment that the *Hūsiwo* display special involvement with the ethereal. The special status of the *Adavu* is also seen in the extra rules of behaviour and conduct that the audience have to put up with. For example, the spectators are required to bare their chest and head (no top wear), and in some places they must kneel down while the *Adavu* is in progress. It is also a moment during which magico-spiritual objects are brought out, and sometimes 'miraculous' feats may be performed.³³ This music is also played to mark the graduation of neophytes who are led through a death-rebirth ritual, or for the same ritual performed to mark the purification of a *Hūsi* who has been defiled.³⁴ On the practice and concept regarding death-rebirth ritual in the contexts mentioned, it is important to hear what Mircea Eliade repeats in his works: "access to spiritual life always entails death to the profane condition, followed by a new birth."³⁵ In another place, Eliade stresses the reversibility of sacred time:

"... religious man lives in two kinds of time, of which the more important, sacred time, appears under the paradoxical aspect of a circular time, reversible and recoverable, a sort of eternal mystical present...."

There are three important aspects to the music of *Adavu*, as far as the construction of time is concerned. The music, as partially transcribed below (Ex. 5), is easily identified with its monorhythmic pattern, ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ etc. which is played by a majority of the musical instruments, except the master drum. Secondly, there are subtle and obvious changes in tempo, and finally there is also a change in the overall metric scheme.

The transcription indicates that the opening phrase is played at a very fast tempo (♩ = ca. 200). After about eight seconds, the tempo begins to slow down gradually and is temporarily stabilized at ♩ = ca. 160. The music then accelerates again briefly, depending upon cues and impulses received from the dancers.

The opening pulsation (prestissimo) lends itself to a 4/4 time organisation:



However, by the time the moment of stabilization is reached, a 3/4 time has been established³⁷:



Example 5, Excerpt from *Adavu*: Interaction of tempo fluctuation, strict time and free rhythm.

Prestissimo $\text{♩} \approx \text{ca. } 200$

Voices
Free Rhythm

Accomp.
(tutti)

A- h̄ dz̄ mi-yi bo, a-yee hee! De a-h̄ dz̄

rit.

(now ca. 160)

mi-yi bo. A-h̄ dz̄ mi-yi bo

gboj-gblo-dza (mnemonics)

ki-tó ki-tó ki-tó ki-tó Ulo-gà-gà- Ulo-gà-gà Ulo-tó-tó Ulo-gà-gà Ulo-tó-tó (mnemonics)

duple effect

a-yee hee! De a-h̄ dz̄

accel.

duple effect

Despite this metric ambiguity, the insistent monorhythmic pattern is never obscured, especially with the instruments reinforcing one another.³⁸ The song which accompanies the *Adavu* is sung in free rhythm, in opposition to the strict rhythm of the instrumental accompaniment as earlier described. To avoid unnecessary repetition, readers should recall previous analysis involving the free rhythm songs known as *Tsitrenuhawo*.

The dance which accompanies the *Adavu* assumes a form of running and semi-dancing in a circle. While the running does not necessarily synchronize with the background rhythmic precision, arm and torso movements normally accent the initial beats in the two types of metric groupings described above. There is, however, an obvious physical relationship between the tempo of the music and the pace at which the running and the semi-dancing are done.

Both the music and the dance can only be understood and appreciated in relation to the heightened spiritual experience sought and 'lived'.³⁹ The temporal framework of

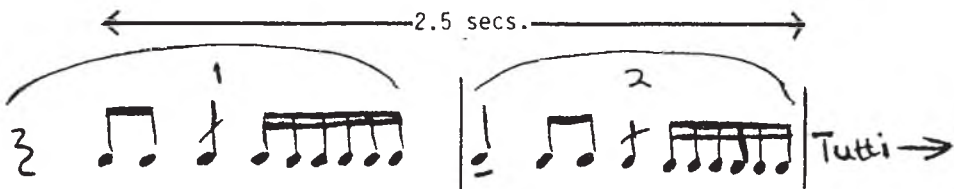
the music is deliberately kept ambiguous. The opposition of free and strict time structures heightens the dramatic moment and places the audience (dancers too) in a situation where temporal orientation is blurred and disembodied temporarily. The role of this ambiguity in the affective determination of an elevated or spiritual experience cannot, therefore, be overstressed. The experience of the 'unusual' is further facilitated by the themes of the accompanying song. For example:

A momentous event has occurred;
 Don your magical powers.
 Ayee he! (*mystical exclamation peculiar to Yeve*)
 Sovi Agbade (*mystical figure*) is on the offensive
 To Gbaga (*river*)
 To Gbaga.
 A momentous event has occurred;
 Don your magical powers.
 Ayee he!
 A momentous event:
 Out with the charms.

While the monorhythmic patterns convey the idea of an 'arrest of time' (i.e. repetition), the circular dance motion also reinforces the idea of the 'atemporal'. The running in a circle does not indicate in any perceptible manner **where the dancers begin, where they go, and where they end**. Even the notion of 'where' as depicted above should also include the 'when' in order to complete the temporal dimension present. This spatio-temporal interpretation becomes relevant especially when we consider the heightened spiritual experience as an important trait of the *Adavu*. In this context, sacred time must defy human measurement, and both past, present and future become frozen temporarily. The circular motion of both the dance and the music also helps suspend the participants (audience and *Hūsiwo*) in that 'spiritual' state. This 'suspense' must therefore explain further the idea of 'arrest of time' introduced earlier.

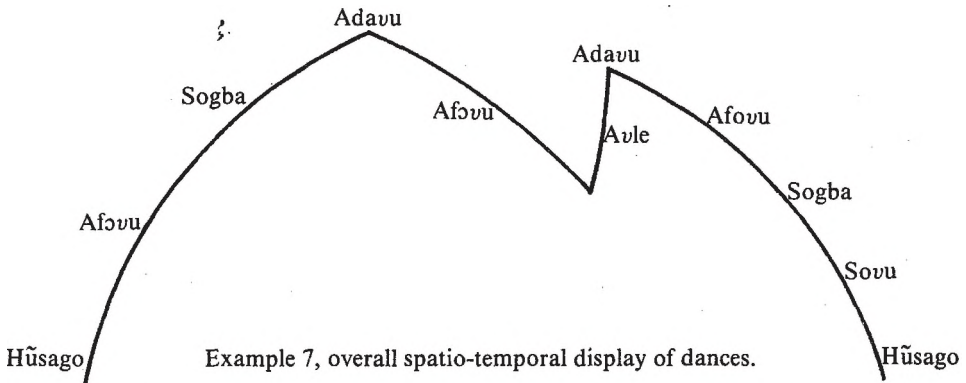
Another temporal phenomenon connected with the *Adavu* is the transition from the *Adavu* to the next dance piece. This bridge passage which also constitutes the opening motif of the next dance (called *Afovu*) is played at a fast tempo (see Ex. 6).

Example 6, Master drum's bridge/opening motif into *Afovu* dance music ♩ ca. 176



Within that brief moment of the transition one could see most of the dancers running back into the shrine. To be consistent with the element of secrecy, the dancers must accomplish their descent from that spiritual place on high, in the shrine, not in the public domain. To keep up with the spiritual excitement generated within the audience, it is necessary to continue the music by playing one which is capable of maintaining a level of energy close to the previous *Adavu*. Thus, the *Afovu* which has an overall tempo of ♩ = ca. 176 is an appropriate one (cf. *Adavu*, ♩ = 200, 160). As

illustrated in Example 7, the *Adavu* always coincides with the peak of the total performance and its affective ramifications.⁴¹



The beginning and the end, designated by *Hūsago* which has a slower tempo (♩ = ca. 90) and a gorgeous dance movement, can all be described as plain levels from which the ritual and musical drama unfolds. The overall temporal plan in the construction of the music, dance, and the dramatic enactment is therefore essential to the immediate and long-term aesthetico-dramatic effect sought by the participants.

Conclusion

From all that we have **seen, felt and heard** so far, we can conclude that, in *Yeve* cult music, the creation and employment of spatial and temporal elements for special effects represents a critical dimension of the ritual complex. While the affective import of the elements is paramount to the overall ritual success, such extra considerations as psycho-aesthetic functions and participation of the secular audience must be attended to. As a result, there are sanctioned 'deviations', as reflected in the *Aulewɔwɔ* and the unique manipulation of the special costume known as *avlaya*. This deviation is also necessary in order to fulfill the inherent artistic needs that must be expressed and fulfilled. Finally, tempo, rhythmic order and disorder, and the strategic choice of musical forms in a sequence all unite in the creation and determination of sonic and visual patterns. The emergence and merging of these patterns in time and space are crucial to the elicitation of desired responses from both the audience and the *hūsīwo*. The special case of time in music and how it relates to other temporal experiences in the context of *Yeve* ritual is thus presented.

Footnotes and References

*I am grateful to Prof. Ruth Stone (Indiana University) whose research interests in time in African music inspired the completion of this paper. Secondly, I wish to state my interest in this subject does not represent an attempt at 'selling' the *Yeve* cult to my readers. My eternal security signed on the Lord Jesus Christ would dictate the contrary. The extent to which this value declaration interferes with my analysis is very minimal, and the reader should judge that for him/herself. It is repugnant that the so-called 'value-free' concept in the social sciences is leading many people along like helpless victims of circumstances. However, many social scientists now believe the concept is a sham.

1. Some important works that have addressed time in music in a quantitative manner (sometimes with gestalt overtones) include the following: Grosvenor Cooper, *The rhythmic structure of music* (U of Chicago Press, 1960). Cooper however discusses psychological dimensions in the human perception of, and reaction

to, time. Maury Yeston, *The stratification of musical rhythm*, (New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1976); Gordon Edwin, *Tonal and rhythmic patterns: An objective analysis* (New York: State U of NY, 1976); David Epstein, *Beyond Orpheus: studies in musical structure* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979).

Phenomenological perspectives which attempt to elucidate the subjective and the qualitative aspect of time are: Alfred Schutz, 'Making music together', in *Collected Papers: II*, ed. M. Natanton (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973); Victor Zuckerkandl, *Sound and symbol* (Princeton UP, 1956); Edward Lippman, *A humanistic philosophy of music* (New York UP, 1977); Thomas Clifton, *Music as heard: A study in applied phenomenology* (New Haven: Yale Univ. 1983).

2. This may be due to, among other things, lack of expertise in the field of music.

3. The whole manuscript was presented in the form of seminar lectures during the spring semester of 1983 at Indiana University, Bloomington.

4. Dichotomy between 'audience' and the actual 'participants' is maintained to a large extent in this ritual context.

5. For detailed information on the *Yeve* cult, see the following: G.K. Nukunya, "The *Yeve* Cult among Southern Ewe-Speaking People of Ghana." *Ghana Journal of Sociology*, 5:1 (1969), 1-7; Jacob Spieth, *Die Religion der Eweer in Sud-Togo* (Berlin: 1911); Nissio Fiagbedzi, "The music of the Anlo: its historical background, cultural matrix and style". Diss. UCLA, 1977.

6. There are two secret languages and two basic types of costume. The neophyte is identified by the public through the particular language or costume adopted. A commitment to a particular god within the pantheon determines specific type of language or costume.

7. Most of these situations are, however, determined or confirmed through divination.

8. There is a special practice by which musicians and relatives of initiates are accorded affiliate membership status through a minor initiation ritual. This minor initiation is referred to as "hūduḍu" (lit. eating of *Hū*), and the major one performed for full membership is "hūdzedze" (lit. falling into *Hū*).

9. The term used for 'defile' is "gblē hū" (lit. to spoil *Hū*), and the state of going 'wild' is known as "alagādzedze".

10. Both A.M. Jones and Fiagbedzi have given us transcriptions of secular and *Yeve* musical samples. For Fiagbedzi, see op. cit.; Jones, *Studies in African Music*, Vol. 2 (London: Oxford UP, 1959).

11. Jones (op. cit.) lists up to seven dances, while Fiagbedzi lists nine (op. cit.). The additions in Fiagbedzi are those which are optional.

12. There are however a few exceptions which are mainly due to ritual constraints and aesthetic considerations. For the aesthetic, an example is the solo singing that precedes "adzowwo", an introductory piece in the *Xatsevu* or *Adzida* musical genre as practised among the Anlo-Ewe.

13. Part of the ritual may precede the musical portion.

14. Remember that the event takes place in a village where electric lights are uncommon, and where there is absence of industrial set ups which could disturb the night.

15. The main musical event ceases just before dusk.

16. The morning-afternoon tradition is adhered to in the larger *Ewe* musical practice.

17. For a detailed description of double bell technique in *Yeve* music, see D. Avorgbedor, "Double bell technique among the *Ewe* of Ghana." *Percussive Notes*, 20 (1981):1. 77-80.

18. *Ewe* is a tonal language with three basic tone levels, High, Mid, Low, respectively.

19. This suggests that a reliance upon mnemonics as a guide in rhythmic notation and description should be done with great care.

20. Additional rules are observed during such major occasions. They do not eat, urinate, cry or laugh in the presence of an outsider (i.e. non-initiate).

21. This "private transaction" is also important in the renewal of energy and interest in the singing. In fact, eating and drinking may take place in that private environment, but since such information is restricted, I cannot describe it further.

22. The high musical skill and creativity involved are alluded to in the term "gamamla", lit. weaving or unfolding of bell, used to describe the playing of bells.

23. The ascribed or manifest comic qualities of the god *Auleketi* cannot be determined by the outsider.

24. There are limits to what the *Avlesi* can or cannot do.

25. The *Avlesi* can call for the music to be played.

26. I have not come across a male *Avlesi* who performs erotic acts, although male *Avlesiwo* exist.

27. John Dewey, *Art as experience* (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1934); George Santayana, *The sense of beauty* (New York: Dover Publications, 1955). These two American philosophers have addressed

the positive role of the “ugly” in the presentation of art works. George Devereux also confirms my aesthetic argument thus: “Art prescribes polite ways for saying impolite things; it provides ways for expressing the inexpressible.” See his “Art and mythology: a general theory”, in Carol Joplin, ed., *Art and aesthetics in primitive societies* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1971) 193-224.

28. For more information on the role of the “comic” in the reversal of sacred time, see, for example, Bruce Kapferer, “Entertaining Demons: Comedy, Interaction and meaning in a Sinhalese healing ritual.” *Social Analysis* 1 (1979): 108-152.

29. The *avlaya* is worn by males.

30. *Yeve* is also described as a pantheon the worship of which involves a lot of money, especially on becoming a member of the cult.

31. See note 30.

32. What we normally refer to as “possession” rarely occurs in *Yeve* contexts.

33. Some of the “feats” often reported include holding water in a broken clay pot, and standing on a leaf in the air. I have (personally) seen some examples involving magical objects and unusual deeds.

34. Fiagbedzi (*op. cit.*) gives a vivid account of a death-rebirth ritual witnessed.

35. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane*, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959: 201.

36. *Ibid* 70.

37. This duality in tempo is also confirmed by Fiagbedzi (*op. cit.*)

38. Although monorhythmic, timbral accents are important, as given in the mnemonics.

39. The extent to which we can determine people’s spiritual experience is very limited.

40. This is a slightly altered version from Fiagbedzi.

41. This graphic representation is a modification of Fiagbedzi’s model (*op. cit.*).

Key to pronunciation

Standard Ewe orthography has been employed in both the musical texts and the main body of the article.

v : voiced bilabial fricative; produced with both lips as in blowing a candle.

d : voiced retroflex; made with the tip of the tongue against the front of the palate. For example, as in “risk”.

gb : voiced labiovelar stop; produced with simultaneous closure of the lips as for “b” or “p” at the soft palate. Released simultaneously and without aspirate. Air passes through the narrow opening between the two lips.

The teeth are not involved in the articulation.

ɔ : as in “paw”.

˜ : articulated with nasal quality.

ŋ : velar nasal; as in “sing”.

Key to musical transcriptions

Since the focus of this paper is not on pitch analysis, intervals smaller than a semitone are not indicated. Broken bar-lines are used to avoid the impression of metric accents as associated with regular bar-lines. In most cases the bell pattern presents the overriding metric scheme.

The songs are transposed and transcribed with C as the tonal centre. Note heads without stems (•••••) are used to indicate the ‘free rhythm’ structure of the music where appropriate. Temporal relations are determined by the vertical and horizontal alignments between the ‘free rhythm’ component and the accompanying ‘strict time’ musical activity.