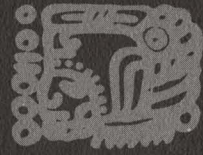


ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4324



Music of the Dagomba from Ghana

Recorded by Verna Gillis, with David Moisés Pérez Martínez



MUSICIANS ENTERING VILLAGE ON NANTON PLAYING BUSH COW HORNS

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4324

SIDE 1

- Band 1 Harvest songs 3:00
3 pressure drums (lunsi)
Band 2 Harvest Songs 5:45
3 pressure drums (lunsi)
Band 3 Gondze praise music A, 5:35; B, 4:50
2-1 string fiddles, 1 rattle

SIDE 2

- Band 1 Gingeli entertainment music 5:35
soda bottle, music bow
Band 2 SAME 4:00
Band 3 Flute Festival music 6:03
Harruna Bamaya Group
flute, 2 drums, rattle
Band 4 Warrior music 6:02
Bush cow horns, 3 drums, bell

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Music of the Dagomba from Ghana
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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4324

MUSIC OF THE DOGOMA from GHANA

Recorded by VERA GILLIS
with Davis Moises Perez Matinez

The origin of the Dagomba, one of the several ethnic groups that reside in northern Ghana, extends as far back as the eleventh century or earlier. The royal estate (rulers) are believed to have migrated into the area from the north-east conquering the indigenous stateless people around the fifteenth century A.D. Since the founding of the kingdom, the people of Dagbon because of trade, religion, warfare, or other political reasons have come in contact with several foreign cultures. Among a few of these societies include the Hausa of northern Nigeria, Gurma (Gruma) of Upper Volta, and Ashanti of central Ghana.

Scholarly literature concerning the historical development much less the present state of music in Dagbon is scarce. Research has been concentrated on selected musical traditions (see DjeDje 1978 and Kinney 1970) rather than a comprehensive survey of all instrumental types and musical forms. Therefore, very little is known about the entire organization of Dagomba music society.

We do know that the location of Dagbon in the lower savannah belt region of West Africa has contributed greatly to the present state of music. The people of this area are extremely mobile therefore causing a constant exchange of political, social, and cultural ideologies. For example, due to influences from the south and other Sudanic neighbors, primarily the Ashanti and Hausa, several drum types are found in Dagbon in spite of the fact that tree vegetation is limited in this area of the continent. Drums constitute the largest and most important instrumental group; they are often performed at royal, social, and political functions.

The presence of so many string instruments (as many as five varieties), the second most important instrumental type in Dagbon, is believed to be a result of interactions with other Sudanic neighbors and north Africans. Like the membranophone, strings are performed at all types of occasions: royal, social, and political.

Several aerophone and idiophone types are used. Most of these instruments do not play as important a role in traditional Dagomba society as those described in the above. Rather, they are normally used as accompanying instruments within other drum and string ensembles.

The musical selections on this record give the interested listener an introduction to Dagomba music society. The listener is able to hear music not only from the Dagomba who now reside in northern Ghana, such as Tamale, the commercial capital of Dagbon, and surrounding towns, but by Dagomba musicians who have migrated to Ghana's capital city of Accra. Dr. Gillis has included a variety of music types so that one obtains a total picture of Dagomba musical expressions.

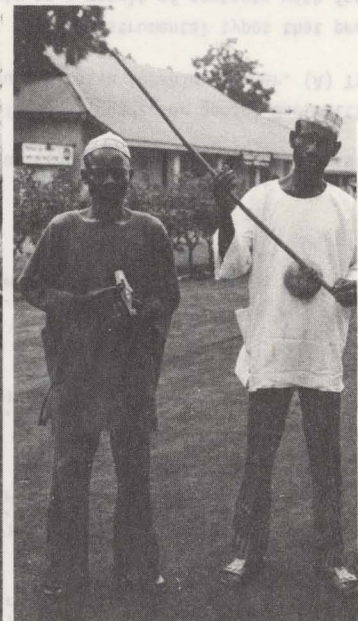
SIDE 1

Band 1 - Three hourglass pressure drums (lunsi, pl.) Harvest songs. Rhythm to bring priest out of the house to consult him about the harvest. Recorded in Accra. Time 3:00

Prior to the 15th century invasion of the ruling estate (those calvary-men who migrated from the north) into present-day northern Ghana, much of the land was controlled by earth priests (tindamba, pl: tindana sing.) who were leaders of the indigenous inhabitants. As ruler of a stateless people, earth priests had authority over all land. Their primary function was to give permission over use of land, and in return received an annual tithe with which to bury sheep for sacrifice to



Doalgga drum in village of Nanton.
(Side 2, band 4).



The gingeli and soda bottle. (Side 2,
bands 1 and 2).

the spirit of the land. Serving as a votary rather than that of a soothsayer, the position was purely a spiritual office. "He was not a ruler but a priest, a mediator between the people and their god" (Staniland 1975:15).

With the conquest of the area by calvarymen many tindamba were sometimes killed or removed from office and replaced by members of the royal dynasty and captains of the army. In spite of these adverse circumstances, the institution itself was not destroyed. Some priests were allowed to remain as village chiefs under a Dagomba divisional chief (Staniland 1975:4). Thus, the performance of harvest songs is extremely significant to indigenous Dagomba society. The re-enactment of this ritual, even out of context, which is the case with this example, demonstrates the manner in which ancient customs have been sustained and integrated into modern life styles regardless of the fact that many Dagomba have moved from their northern homes to reside in the more urban setting of Accra and Kumasi in southern and central Ghana.

Music in Band 1 features three lunsi (also referred to as dondo) drummers performing rhythms used to bring the priest out of the house to consult him about the harvest. The lunga (sing.), believed to have been introduced into Dagbon during the late 17th century with Ya Na (king) Luro, is a double-membrane, stick beaten, hourglass drum of variable pitch. Heard throughout the performance is a call and response form in which the lead drummer plays a six-beat rhythm while the remaining lunsi respond with a repetitive two-beat pattern. By performing patterns at different pitch levels, sonority contrast is achieved within the eight-beat time line. While the lead drummer creates and develops several melodic tunes by varying between two tones--Medium (hertz A220) and High (hertz C261.6)--responding drummers maintain one pitch level throughout the composition--Low (A110).¹ In addition to melodic variety, as

many as six different rhythmic patterns are introduced by the solo drummer. For samples of eight-beat time lines as performed during the harvest ceremony, see the following:

a. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

b. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

c. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

d. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

e. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$



The interior of one of the compounds at Nanton. (Side 2, band 4).

f. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

g. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

1. These are approximate tone levels - not absolute by any means.

Band 2. Three hourglass pressure drums (lunsi, pl.) Harvest songs. Rhythm while the priest pours libations. Recorded in Accra. A.B. Lunnaa, leader. Time 5:45.

Rhythms performed by drummers while the earth priest pours libations are not as long and extended as those in Band 1. The entire time span consists of six beats (twice). In this case the high-pitched lunga player leads with a regular four-beat pattern of different tones--varying between Medium (A220), High (C261.6), and Very High (D just above C261.6). Unlike the example in Band 1, responding drummers perform a three-beat pattern that overlaps with the lead drummer. Similar to Band 1, however, the two lunsi responders maintain a low pitch tone at approximately A110. Both parts are varied occasionally by either continuously repeating patterns with constant overlaps or creating an entirely new statement. Examples of the main rhythmic time line with variations are included below:

Reoccurring pattern:

Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

Variations:

a. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix}$

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b. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ VH \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

c. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

d. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

e. Lead $\begin{matrix} | \\ VH \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ VH \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ M \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} | \\ H \end{matrix}$

Chorus $\begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \blacksquare \\ \blacksquare \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix} \begin{matrix} \curvearrowright \\ \curvearrowright \end{matrix}$

Ululations performed approximately on a high A (hertz 880) by females at the end of the compositions constitute the only vocal utterances heard during the harvest song performance.

Band 3 - Gondze praise music. Two one-string fiddles (gondze or gonje) One rattle (zaabia). Recorded in Tamale. Youth Gonje Group, Alhasan Ibrahim, leader. (A) Time 5:35 (B) Time 4:50

As indicated in the introduction, several of the instrumental types that presently exist in Dagbon were introduced into the society as a result of contacts with foreigners. The one string fiddle (known as gondze or gonje) is one such tradition. According to gondze oral history, the fiddle was introduced into Dagbon during the reign of Ya Na Andani Sigli (c. 1700), who, while visiting Grumaland in Upper Volta, saw a fiddle



Musicians playing the kikoya (Side 2, band 4).

performance at the court of one of the Gruma kings, and decided to include a similar performance style at his palace. Today, the fiddle tradition is an integral feature of Dagomba society: along with lumsi drummers, gondze musicians are expected to record the genealogy history of the Dagomba state as well as participate in festive and social events in the community.

The fiddle is constructed from a hemispherical gourd that is usually covered with the skin of a reptile. The gondze in this recording are covered with alligator skin. Normally, the vibrating string is made from hairs of a horse tail that is attached to a wooden neck and inserted inside the body of the hemispherical gourd. Bowed with a short (10 to 12 inches in length) curved stick that is also made from hairs of a horse tail, the fiddle is performed in an ensemble of one or more fiddlers and accompanied by one or more gourd rattlers. One fiddler normally serves as both the lead vocalist and instrumentalist, while other fiddler(s) and rattler(s) maintain a continuous vocal and instrumental response. The gondze song repertoire consists of praise, historical, entertainment, and sometimes possession songs.

The characteristic feature of Dagomba gondze music is the repetitive melodic and rhythmic time lines that are played by both fiddlers and rattlers. In most cases, the pattern consists of either 24, 12, and on occasion 8 beats. It should be noted, however, that the eight-beat melodic pattern, when played in cross rhythms with the rattler's triple 12-beat structure becomes twelve (see discussion below). The formal structure of the fiddle performance consists of three sections in which: a short opening section introduces melodic themes: a long middle section establishes, develops, and sometimes introduces new and old melodic and rhythmic time lines: and a short closing section restates melodic and rhythmic material. Unlike the opening in which only fiddlers introduce melodic material, the middle section includes melodic and rhythmic statements from vocalists, fiddlers, and rattlers. While fiddlers and rattlers repeat their rhythmic and melodic ostinato, the lead vocalist improvises by developing melodic motives from the fiddle time line. When fiddle compositions are played in a cycle of two or more songs (a two-song cycle is heard in this example although it was shortened from an eight song cycle), a short melodic phrase that is performed on the fiddle serves not only as part of the opening section for subsequent material, but as a connecting motive between the two songs.

In performance not all songs are structured exactly as described in the above. For example, toward the middle of the first song (Gondze A) a secondary theme is introduced which is actually a simpler version of the opening theme; such is not the case in Gondze B. In both compositions several fiddle interludes are introduced.

They also are variations of the primary opening theme. In Gondze B, however, interludes are not only much longer but more complex melodically than those performed in Gondze A.

The call and response technique, between vocal leader/chorus and fiddle leader/fiddle chorus, is another distinguishing element of Dagomba fiddle music. After each vocal leader's statement, the chorus normally responds by singing in unison or heterophonically with the fiddler's melodic line.

The vocal and fiddle range of Gondze A is about one octave while that for Gondze B is a major ninth: the former extending from g to g' while the latter from g to a'.² An anhemitonic pentatonic scale (five pitches with no semitones) is used in both songs.

The rhythmic structure of the two songs differ. While fiddlers in Gondze A play an eight-beat pattern, rattlers in very fast triplets (the second beat sounds as if it is omitted) perform a twelve-beat structure. Both the melodic and rhythmic time spans in Gondze B consist of twelve beats with rattlers also playing in triplets.



2. The system used to indicate range is based on the system used by Anthony Baines, Musical Instruments Through the Ages, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1961, p. 21

* * * * *

Side 2

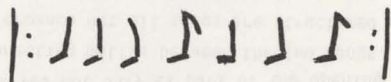
Bands 1 and 2 - One musical bow (gingeli or jinjelim) One percussion (soda bottle) Gingeli entertainment music. Recorded in Tamale. Yakubu Fuseri playing the gingeli. Time 5:35 and 4:00.

The musical bow, one of the most widely distributed chordophone types in Africa, exists in a variety of forms: mouth bow, earth bow, and bow with calabash resonator. The one most prominently used by the Dagomba, known as gingeli or jinjelim, is constructed from a single string that is attached to a long, curved wooden stick.

A gourd calabash placed at the lower end of the string serves as the resonator. By simultaneously plucking the string with three fingers of the right hand and slightly placing and lifting the resonator from the abdomen, sound is produced. Normally a single gingeli along with an empty soda bottle (see photo) that is struck with a coin are used as instrumental accompaniment for gingeli vocal music. Both instrumentalists perform the vocal part--the string player as vocal leader and percussionist as vocal response.

In these two examples only two pitches in different registers (c#'/c#' and

d'/d'') are performed alternately on the string instrument, while the percussionist maintains a continuous 12-beat rhythmic time pattern:



Although the chordophone is performed in a somewhat free improvisatory fashion--without a strict melodic or rhythmic pattern, the vocalist's utterances appear to follow a set scheme. After both instrumentalists have played a short introduction (the gingeli player enters first, followed by the percussionist), the vocal leader later enters with a five-note melodic pattern, always briefly ascending at the beginning and gradually descending towards the middle of the phrase. He usually remains in the lower range to develop and close the end of the melodic statement. In the second performance (Band 2), a vocal response is heard. Whereas the vocal leader's various melodic patterns may extend anywhere from 12 to 24 beats (♩ = 1 beat), the chorus is only composed of a short 8-beat phrase that follows the same melodic contour (in the lower range) as that performed by the vocal leader. Like other performances of Dagomba music, a pentatonic scale system is used. The ambitus of both songs is about one octave minor sixth.

Band 3 - One flute (yua), two drums (gungon and lunga), and one rattle (sayalli or sayeli). Flute festival music. Recorded in Tamale. Harruna Bamaya Group; Harruna Alhasson, leader. Time 6:03.

Flute music in Dagbon is commonly performed at festive occasions with much singing and dancing. Besides the flute (yua), other instruments performed in the ensemble include the following: two drums (gungon and lunga) and one rattle (sayalli or sayeli). Because this example has been performed out of context, vocal utterances are not included. The gungon, a large two-headed stick beaten drum, provides the lower pitch tones; its rhythmic ostinato (d. J J J), serving as an underlying bass, is much slower in time value in comparison to that of other percussion instruments. Rhythms performed on the lunga pressure drum (see description for Side 1, Band 1) are not only much faster in tempo (with variations) but are played at a higher pitch level, providing both melodic and rhythmic contrast to the gungon. The large gourd rattle, sayalli or sayeli, is shaken at a faster speed than all other instruments in the ensemble; its repetitive rhythmic pattern (J J J J J J J J J J J J) is quite distinctive because of the difference in pitch and tone quality from other instrumental types. The yua, made of wood, about six to eight inches long, is vertically blown. Normally the flute is constructed with two to three finger holes, two placed on the front side and one at the base. In performance, the right or left index and tall fingers are placed over the front openings, while the index finger of the opposite hand covers the lower hole. The instrument produces tones in the c'' to c''' range of the Western pitch gamut.

In this example, the flute player, serving as leader of the ensemble, performs several melodic and rhythmic pattern--alternating at will during the course of the performance. As many as ten or more improvisatory melodic phrases are used, all performed within the approximate range of a major sixth. Similar to most music performed by the Dagomba, an anhemitonic pentatonic scale, consisting of five notes without a semitone, is used. The eight-beat repetitive melodic and rhythmic patterns performed by all instruments is based on a duple time scheme..

band 4 - Bush cow horns (kikoya), three drums (two lunsi and one doalga/dalbihi) and one bell (dawule). Warrior music. Recorded in Nanton. Time 6:02.

Warrior music is important to most societies because it is used to praise and encourage warriors before, during, and after battles, or music is played during peace to commemorate the victories and successes of a particular kingdom. Such music is always an important ingredient of any festive occasion--battles are re-enacted and much singing and dancing are performed to celebrate and honor victors. This example, though performed out of context at the home of one of the king's officials (wulan yili), named Yakubu Alhasan in Nanton, a small town approximately twenty to thirty miles north of Tamale in northern Ghana, demonstrates the mood and excitement that is sometimes generated at a festive occasion.

A number of instruments are included in the performance: several bush cow horns (kikoya), (see photo), three drums (two lunsi and one doalga/dalbihi), one bell (dawule), and voices. The performance begins with the lunsi players, who, with small bell rattles attached to the drum, play a short rhythmic pattern (J J J J J J J J J J J J). The dawule later joins the lunsi in playing the same pattern with minor variations. Following this brief introduction, bush cow horns enter playing in a hocket fashion in groups of three's. First, horns at a low register enter followed by those in the middle register. These two groups, playing sometimes alternately and simultaneously in the same rhythm, move back and forth from approximately a major third to a unison/minor second interval; they serve as response for the higher register solo horn player. The solo kikoya player varies his two-note melodic passage, playing series of one, two, three, to six beats at a time. After all of the above has been established, the doalga, also known as dalbihi (a long cylindrical stick beaten drum that is played resting on a drum stand on the ground), (see photo), enters with a short rhythmic pattern, which is varied and played intermittently throughout the performance. Even more excitement is created by ululation, singing, and speaking which is also heard throughout the performance. The horn music is based on an anhemitonic pentatonic scale within an octave range, extending approximately from c' to c''.

Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, Ph.D., Tuskegee Institute

August, 1978

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Recorded during the summer of 1976 by Verna Gillis, with David Moises Perez Martinez. Bands 1 and 2 of Side 1 were assisted by Ramon Daniel Perez Martinez.

Editing by Verna Gillis
Notes by Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje

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Dedicated to David Gillis

OTHER ALBUMS BY VERNA GILLIS

FE 4281 THE ISLAND OF QUISQUEYA. Music from the Dominican Republic. Recorded by Verna Gillis. With Ramon Daniel Perez Martinez. Descriptive Notes.

FE 4282 THE ISLAND OF ESPANOLA. Music from the Dominican Republic. Recorded by Verna Gillis. With Ramon Daniel Perez Martinez. Descriptive Notes.

FE 4283 CRADLE OF THE NEW WORLD. Music from the Dominican Republic. Recorded by Verna Gillis. With Ramon Perez Martinez. Descriptive Notes.

FE 4284 SONGS FROM THE NORTH. Music from the Dominican Republic. Recorded by Verna Gillis. With Ramon Perez Martinez. Descriptive Notes.

FE 4491 VODUN-RADA RITE FOR ERZULIE. Recorded in Haiti by Verna Gillis. Descriptive Notes.

FE 4531 RARA IN HAITI. Gaga in the Dominican Republic. Recorded by Verna Gillis. With Ramon Daniel Perez Martinez. Descriptive Notes.