

**THE SOCIAL MECHANICS OF GOOD MUSIC:  
A DESCRIPTION OF DANCE CLUBS  
AMONG THE ANLO EWE-SPEAKING PEOPLE OF GHANA<sup>1</sup>**

*by*

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Among the Ewe-speaking people of southeastern Ghana, southern Togoland and southern Dahomey, there are different kinds of music. We have narrative songs, war songs, cradle songs, dirges, play songs, and even chorales (which are foreign to our culture). Along with these one can find different types of cult music belonging to the local rites of worship of the gods, and court music. In African societies, "music" incorporates dance; therefore "music" in this paper refers to the drumming, singing, and dancing of the dance clubs.

From this brief listing it should be clear that hearing one particular kind of music on a record or watching one live performance of any sort of African music does not mean that that is the only kind of music in Africa. Furthermore, the listener might bear in mind what K. C. Murray writes about the detailed structure of this art as practised in Nigeria: "The average European despises African music because he knows nothing about it. He finds the rhythms unattractive and 'sinister' and the apparent repetition monotonous. Research would show a different picture by demonstrating that monotony is not there, just as trees are not all the same because they are green"<sup>2</sup>.

**The Organization of the Dance Club**

In every society, whether a highly sophisticated and complex one, or one of the most simple, organization is the source of almost everything. Among the Anlo Ewe, who live in the southeastern corner of Ghana (who are known as the Anlo Ewe because they speak a dialect of Ewe called Anlo), recreational group music is organized in clubs. There are different clubs, each with a different name, though a drum ensemble, dancers, and singers will constitute each club. On the other hand, the musical style, as defined by the Ewe, will differ in each club. Some clubs may undertake to perform several different styles while other clubs may limit themselves to performing only a few.

The organization of these clubs very often takes the form of an age group: that is to say, within any one community, people within one age group tend to form their own music club. Membership in these clubs is for both men and women, though there are some clubs which are predominantly or exclusively male or female. Every adult non-Christian member of a village, town or ward is expected to belong to a club, unless he is not interested in the art.

Although the concept of practising as known in the West, where a musician works at improving his skill for hours at a time, does not exist among the Ewes, a group newly-formed always sets aside days to meet and rehearse their music. Because the clubs are voluntary organizations, the meetings always take place in the evenings, after the day's work is over. It might be every other evening, or three straight evenings in a row, skipping the fourth evening, for in Eweland, every four days is a big market day in one

<sup>1</sup> Paper read at the Spring Meeting of the New England Chapter, Society for Ethnomusicology at Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.A., on April 18, 1970.

*Ed. note:* The special characters in use in Ewe are represented by the equivalent italic characters. For pronunciation see *African Music*, Vol. IV, No. 4, 1970, p. 6 footnote.

<sup>2</sup> Murray, K. C., *African Music Society Newsletter*, Vol. I, No. 5, p. 44, 1952. "Music and Dancing in Nigeria".

or another of the towns and villages of a particular area. It is the day when people travel to market centres with various products to sell — the day when families do their big shopping. Therefore it is a busy day for everybody, and not conducive to any kind of social gathering. Anything planned on a big market day is not very often successful. Even funerals are sometimes poorly attended when they fall on a market day.

Every social club needs rules and by-laws to protect the safety and smooth operation of the group, and dance clubs are no exception. They elect their own officers, leaders and elders and other officials as they think best. They are not money-making organizations, but they institute fines and impose them on members who violate the laws of the group.

To have money for running the group and buying all of the necessary things, members pay dues. Sometimes they also do communal labour<sup>3</sup>, to raise funds. Occasionally they receive donations from well-wishers, and there are some individuals who can afford to pay a little more than the dues that have been set. Then there is also the little amount they receive from being hired to perform.

Work in the clubs is shared according to tradition. That is to say, women do certain jobs, and men do others. The men are responsible for taking care of the instruments that the group owns, and for mending them when the need arises. Incidentally, until recently the men have always been the drummers, even in clubs which might just be for women, for traditionally women do not drum among the Ewe. At present this is changing; modernization is taking place everywhere, and the Ewe are now flexible about some of their old customs, and therefore allow women to play.

Every dance club is identified by its name, or by a name for the style of music it performs. Sometimes the name of the club leader or club composer becomes widely accepted as the name of the club. For example, "Akpalu's Group," "Dzenawo's Group", or "The Club of Atsubota," just to mention a few. These are all composers for the clubs mentioned and their names have become synonymous with those of the clubs. For the Ewe, any outstanding feature or features in the musical content will determine its style. For example, because of the prominence of rattles in the Adzida and Britannia Clubs, the style of their music is called *axatsevu* (*axatse* means rattle and *vu* means drum). Both Kpomegbe and Holland Clubs play in the *Akpevu* style; i.e., the members will clap their hands throughout the performance. However, both the *Agbeko* and *Gahu* Clubs have derived their names from their styles: the *Agbeko* and *Gahu* styles.

Just as instrumental skill does not depend upon so-and-so many hours a day of individual practice and formal training, composition is not taught, but considered an inherited gift. There are legends that certain people acquired the skill through supernatural forces, but in fact there are families that are known to have produced composers for two or three generations. The composer is first of all a poet who earns his reputation by the quality of his texts. His melody will be his own, but it will not change from one text to another.

In every village or section of a village there are at least two or three music styles or clubs, and it is possible to find more than one composer within a club. A composer will create new songs for the formation of a new group, or as additions to the repertoire of an old group. Before such a song is taught, a few selected people will get together and learn it first, so that they can sing along with the composer or song leader at the regular singing practice. Because there are different kinds of music, there are different kinds of songs: there are war songs and play songs which are generally short in nature; then there are topical songs and epics, which are very long. The texts are allusive and difficult for an outsider to grasp. (See example 1 and 2 in the Appendix).

<sup>3</sup> As a group, that is, but not to the accompaniment of bells or drumming. They may sing songs, of course, as any group of people working together might do.

### The Dance Club in the Community

Within each club there are some talented men and women with good voices who are selected as song leaders. They act as preceptors in assisting the composer during practice and at the time of performance. These song leaders, and those with instrumental skill, are not limited to performing one particular style of music, or for one particular club. That is to say, a very good singer or drummer can perform with other clubs within his village or section of a village, and by the same token a good composer can compose for more than one club within the community. Incidentally, the two examples in the Appendix are composed by the same composer for two different styles of music.

Every club has its own headman (*Wumega*) or patron, but other headmen and elders have a say in the club's affairs and in the affairs of other clubs. Because Africans live a communal type of life, everybody in the community is looked upon as a member of the clubs. The concept of the clubs is thus very much like that of citizenship. If your parents are citizens of a certain nation either by birth or by legal proclamation, you are automatically a citizen, as their child. If your town has two or three dance clubs, you are surely going to take part in the music of at least one of these clubs, and probably more, because you are a child of that town (unless, as stated earlier, you are a Christian and are forbidden by the Church to participate in the activities of the clubs, or you are not interested in the art).

Now let us ask what would happen if someone were not a Christian, but nevertheless did not participate in the affairs of the clubs. A very short answer is that he or she would not enjoy the facilities of the clubs. And what are the facilities? In communal societies everybody enjoys part of his contribution to the society. How does someone enjoy his musical contribution to a society to which he belongs? There are so many answers to this question that, without exaggeration, they could form the body of a separate paper. But to make a long story into a short one, let us consider social contribution and its reward, first as it operates in traditional *Ewe* banking, and then as it operates in one kind of musical contribution to the community (one much criticized by Westerners): drumming at funerals.

Before banks were known to our people, they had a practice of monthly or weekly collections known as *Sodzodzo*. They would organize themselves into small groups of from five to ten persons. Every month or every week, depending upon the agreement of the members, they would collect a fixed amount per head and give it all to one member of the group. The next month or week they would do the same for another member, and so on until each one had received his or her share. Then they would start around again. Now if, for some reason, a member ceased to pay his share, his membership might be terminated and the money collected from him would be returned to him. Or, the rest of the members might continue paying and collecting, and when his turn came to draw, he would be given only what had been collected from him before he ceased to pay. In this way he would receive no more than he contributed, and no one would be cheated.

Now that we know what *Sodzodzo* is, we can better understand that when a member of the community fails to participate in the music of the group, he will likewise receive no more than he contributed. We dance at funerals to mourn the departed soul, and to play the music that he or she used to enjoy in this life, for the last time. Some people do not find this aspect of our culture understandable, and so they criticize it. Not very long ago, however, at General Eisenhower's funeral, the military band was there to play. Why was the band there? Why was the Army there? If we went into the matter, we would come out with the same reasons that motivate Africans in general, and *Ewes* in particular to sing and drum and dance at funerals.

As a member of the community, the deceased might have made specific contributions to a dance club — for example, as a participating member, by gifts or money, or by service as an advisor — so due respect must be given him for all he has done. Moreover,

all these things are sometimes done not because the departed one was himself directly involved with a dance club, but because he had a friend or relative who was a member of a particular club. The colleagues of this friend or relative might be invited to come and play at the funeral, and they would respond because the call came from someone who had been part of the musical community.

So just as you draw your share in the *Sodzodzo*, you draw your share in the music of the community, and if you fail to participate in the musical groups, then you are going to find it difficult to get a group to perform for you if someone dies in your family. Thus the person whose religion keeps him from participating, or who does not take part in our music from lack of interest, excludes himself from more than just a recreational activity. Very often they are the people who will hire an Agbadza group to perform if someone died in the family. However, nowadays in the cities and urban centres where there are Agbadza Clubs among the *Anlo* communities, they try to operate very much like the dance clubs back at home. In other words, a delinquent member will be treated exactly as his counterpart at home. The author knows of instances when even Christians were denied burial by their churches because they were not paying their dues, and therefore the family had to call on an Agbadza group to perform.

### The Formation of a New Style or Club.

The music of the clubs I have described is traditional in the sense that it is passed from one player to the next and, to some extent, from one generation to the next by ear and example; and also in the sense that what any one club plays is not subject to more than minor changes. There is no law, however, against creating new dance styles or clubs among the *Anlo* Ewe-speakers, and when a new dance style or music becomes popular and is liked by many people, others in the village, town or general area adopt the style. This is why, in one village or town, one can find two "Adzida" groups, two "Kete" groups, two "Gadzo" or "Woleke" groups. Africans, like any other peoples of the world, know what is good music and what is bad. They like to try new things, and they know what they think is beautiful. Therefore, if a group of people in a particular area see a new dance, and like the movements as well as the music, they will adopt it and make it part of the village repertoire.

There are two ways of adopting a new musical style. Informally, someone who may have seen and liked a new dance will bring the idea home to his friends, and if they like it, they will organize themselves into a group and start working on the music — that is, if the example they are imitating is nearby and they do not need to ask the people who practise that style to teach them. It is considered good manners, however, to ask for instruction, which is the formal way of adopting a style, and which always creates good relations between neighbours, as I know from observing the process at first hand.

In either case, whether the music is learned by informal imitation or through instruction that is formally requested, the mechanics of inaugurating the club will be the same, and will be described in connection with the formal adopting of a new style. I should say, however, that it is not usually possible to know the real origin of a new style. I know, for example, of some dances which started when I was a teenager in Anyako. I know where my people got these dances from, but I do not know where those from whom they copied got them.

When a group of people is interested in forming a club around a new musical style, and wish to proceed in the preferred formal way, they will send a delegation to the group that practises the style, asking them to come and teach them. If the group consulted agrees to this request, they delegate two or four people to go and teach their new style. Usually the teachers will include a composer or a precentor, a drummer, and good dancers. They will live with the new group, sometimes as long as a month, sometimes for only two or three weeks, and after that period they will return regularly to check

on how the group is progressing. Only when they are satisfied will they leave for good.

The first thing the teachers concern themselves with is the song repertoire. They begin by teaching the new group some of their songs. After this has been done for some time, a composer or composers in the newly formed group will take over the task of composing their own songs in the style of the mother group. This is why, for example, one can hear in the music of the Adzomani Club of the town of Anloga, some songs that have tune and text identical with songs in the repertoire of the Adzomani Club of Anyako, which did the teaching. Instruction in the dance and in playing the instrumental parts follows the same pattern.

Before the visiting teachers leave, very often the new group will put on one or two performances in the evening. This is like a practice, a testing of their skill in the new style which they are learning. It is also an informal way of presenting the new club or style to the community. After all this has been done, the visitors will take their leave. Before they go, they will want to know when the new group will be inaugurated, so that they may carry the message to their elders and patrons at home. If no date has been fixed, they will ask to be notified when the group is ready to "come out".

After they have gone, the club will continue to meet to learn their new songs. If it is a completely new dance, they will also work on the steps; but the fact that it is a new style of music does not necessarily mean that all of the motions will be new. In all Anlo dances there is a certain standard body movement and as a result, people who do not understand our stylistic differences tend to call every dance they see "Agbadza" because in every dance there will appear a subtle form of contraction-release of the torso, which I call the "basic movement", and which is prominent in the particular dance called "Agbadza". One finds this sharing of a common dance movement in the case of Western classical ballet and modern dance; for example: the first, second, third, fourth and fifth positions of the feet, the *plié relevé*, the leap, *jeté*, *glissade* and *pas de chat*. You find among the Ewe dances known as *Agbeko*, *Gadzo* and *Gahu*, differences in the form of doing the dance and in the footwork, but the "basic movement" will be introduced in each one.

Usually the singing rehearsals are held in the evenings at a certain fixed place. It might be the home of a composer, elder, or staunch member of the club, or at any other place the group finds convenient — but preferably at a house with an enclosure, a place where they would not be much exposed to the public at this early stage of learning. This is very important, for the groups always want to surprise the public with their new art. Although it might be known in the town or village that they are learning some new dance or forming a new club, it is not a good practice to let the public know almost every new song or step before the group presents itself formally.

### Preparing for the Inauguration

Another one or two evening performances might be planned, if the group finds it necessary. This will be the last chance to test their skill in the new art. In the Western sense these evening performances are like the "sneak preview" of a show. The elders, patrons, well-wishers and supporters of the club, and those members of the village community who happen to be there, are the judges. If the elders and patrons are satisfied with the performance, they will call a meeting of the group to discuss a possible date for the inauguration, for this is a big affair, and it needs a lot of preparation. The members need money to buy costumes. They have to get their instruments in good order. The group must have enough money to provide drink for the members and their guests from home and from nearby towns and villages, and including, of course, guests from the home town of the mother group.

In every dance club there are leaders of both sexes. In selecting materials for the costumes, the male and female leaders, in conjunction with the composer, make the

arrangements. They will either call a special meeting of the club to handle the matter, or they will bring the issue up at one of the regular meetings. If they have some particular cloth in mind, they will suggest it. Or they will ask members to bring their suggestions or samples of materials to the next meeting. Although there are some patterns and designs which are common among the *Aylos*, dance clubs very often design their own costumes. They may include the name of the club, or a special design, or something else particular to it, as part of what they wear. Once everyone has agreed on the material, they will start their preparations. A provisional date will be set for everybody to have completed the sewing, and to have all the other necessities ready for the inauguration.

Regular singing practice continues. Both male and female members are busy sewing their costumes. A definite date has been set. Drummers are getting broken drumheads replaced or patched, and making all other necessary repairs. Male dancers are making new rattles. Drum stands are being polished. The dancing area is usually decorated for the occasion with the national flag, and the flags of other countries, if the group can get them, and these are now checked for tears.

Now everything is in order. All members have got their costumes ready, and the news is now spread through the town or village about the inauguration of the new club. The necessary invitations to people living elsewhere have been sent. The zero hour has almost arrived.

The day before the inauguration is always a busy one, a day of unrest and anxiety. Every bit of preparation must have a final touch before midnight. If the group is expecting some guest from outside, women will be busy getting all sorts of foodstuffs ready for the visitors. If some of the visitors are arriving that night, food must be ready for them, and people must be detailed to meet them and take them to their lodging places.

In the Western hemisphere, final rehearsals are considered as important as a performance. The last singing practice of a new *Aylo* club is almost the same, if not more important than a final Western rehearsal. Very often, club members do not even go to bed, especially the composer and some prominent or selected members who have some last minute jobs to do.

### The Inaugural Procession

Everything is now in order, and a time is set for the members to gather at a specified house or place, from where they will go to the outskirts of the town or village to start their performance, a practice known as *Gbedzi yiyi*<sup>4</sup>. It is a well-known secret that the club will try to leave town very early for the outskirts, in order that their processional back into it will come as a surprise to the rest of the people. Some clubs leave for *Gbedzi* as early as 4.00 a.m.; the latest would be 5.30 a.m.

On the outskirts of every town or village there are at least two or three *Gbedzi* spots that are convenient for gathering and rehearsing. The club will follow the regular performance sequence of the music they are to present, so it is very much like what we would call in the West a dress rehearsal, but with serious formal overtones. They start with *Afã* drumming,<sup>5</sup> which calls upon the gods and ancestors for their permission, blessing and guidance in all affairs of the club. A libation will be poured, during which the party who is officiating will lay emphasis upon a good and successful performance, and above all upon unity among the club members.

The *Afã* drumming will be followed by the dance drumming that the club stands for, and after that by *hatsiätsiä* — an interlude music which is played when drumming and dancing stop for a while, in which the dancers and musicians sing to the accompaniment of bells, while they relax. It is at this special early morning performance that the various

<sup>4</sup> and <sup>5</sup> For similar descriptions see Jones, A.M., *Studies in African Music*, Vol. I, pp. 131 and 134. And also Ladzekpo, K. and Pantaleoni H., "Takada Drumming" in *African Music*, Vol 4, No. 4, 1970.

song leaders are tested for their quality before going to perform before the public. Both the hatsiatsiã and the dance drumming, but not the Afã drumming, will be done over two or three times.

When they are satisfied with what they have done, and when they see that the sun is up enough for people in the town to get up, they will start their processional dance. Every club has a special music for processions which they use when the occasion calls for it. In its full form, it will use all the drums of the ensemble, the bells and the rattles. This would be for some major event. On minor occasions, such as an hour or two before an afternoon performance, the group might sing with bell accompaniment, walking through the town without using the drums. When the leaders and elders are sure everything is in order, the dancers will form a line across the road, rattles in hand, if rattles form a large portion of the instrumentation. They will be followed by the musicians, with certain picked women carrying the drums on their heads, and the drummers standing behind them, ready to play. With the lines in order, one of the song leaders, or the composer himself, will line out the words of one of the processional songs they have learned, following the melody in a somewhat free rhythm. As he reaches the end of the text, his rhythm becomes absolutely precise, and sets the tempo for the instruments. Immediately the bell player and one of the drummers will enter, or the bell may anticipate the song leader's tempo and the drums will be brought in after it by a signal from the lead drummer. With the orchestra started, the group will now march towards the town, dancing and singing to the music.

They may go through various principal streets and lanes of the town, doing different dance movements as the lead drummer directs with his instrument. To honour certain dignitaries of the community the group will pause to dance in place before their houses. When they reach the dance arena they will go around in a circle until the drummers get to their positions. There they will set the instruments down and, in conjunction with the song leaders, end the music at the finish of the song they have been singing<sup>6</sup>.

### The Inauguration of a New Club: The Arena Performances

By this time spectators have crowded around the dancing area, waiting to see the group perform. The dancers arrange benches to form three sides of a square, with the instruments in position on the fourth side, and a bench in front of them for the male singers. The female singers sit at the opposite end of the square, and the dancers on either side. Behind the orchestra and also to its side, chairs are arranged for elders and honoured guests. All other spectators stand outside the square<sup>7</sup>.

The arena performance starts, once again, with Afã drumming. A libation is again poured, thanking the deities and ancestors for guiding the club this far, and for leading it from Gbedzi — the rehearsal area on the outskirts of town — to the arena. There will then be some dance drumming, and the group will break off its performance for the morning. Before people disperse, an announcer may make special announcements about the coming afternoon performance. If the group does not want to do this, the announcer will just summon the club to meet at the house of their elder, or Amega (literally, "big man"). There they will be told what time they are to start in the afternoon, and when to be ready to go through town, singing, before coming to the arena.

For this minor processional they will use only bells, without drums or rattles, and it is like reminding the townspeople, or calling them to the arena, for very often people follow the singers right along to where they are going to perform. Arriving at the dancing area, the lead drummer will not wait for the audience to gather, but will start

<sup>6</sup> Processional songs are short, and each is repeated several times before being supplanted by another. The finish of a song is thus possible at the end of any repetition.

<sup>7</sup> These physical arrangements, as well as the placing of the particular instruments have been described for an *Awo* performance of *Takada* dancing in "Takada Drumming", cited above. But I must add that some dance drumming does not use the formation of a square.

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with a long solo, accompanied by someone using one or two sticks on the side of his drum, and by rattles. This serves both to get the music going, and to attract further the attention of the townspeople.

The inauguration of a club is an event spread over as many as seven days, with performances on each day except market day, which is reserved for rest and for shopping. It is thus not so much a single event as a miniature concert season. As you may judge from what has been described, it is a major cultural event in the life of a town. Since the nature of the performance suits the use of an arena, there is in each section of every town an open space with a tree planted at its centre for shade, which is specifically for this kind of musical performance. It may, of course be performed elsewhere, as for instance in the case of a funeral, when the area in front of the house of the bereaved is used.

Interest in African music is very often accompanied by words to the effect that Westerners should take care to preserve this "primitive" art form before it disappears completely. Among my people it does not seem to be in any danger of disappearing. As you can see, our dance drumming is not so much some kind of precious ritual as it is a popular recreational entertainment. It has a tradition, but it is always changing, as well. At any one time in a town or a village there will be the newest music of the youngest age group, the still-performed music of the older generation, and the songs and rhythms of clubs no longer functioning, remembered by fewer and fewer members of the community. As to whether it is "primitive", you must judge for yourselves after you have tried to hear everything that goes on in it<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> The drumming, the basic dance steps and one of the songs for Takada music have been scored and analyzed in the article "Takada Drumming" already cited.



Example 1. "WO YO MI LOO"

The musical score consists of eight staves. The top seven staves are vocal parts, and the bottom staff is for an accompanying double bell. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are written below the notes.

**SOLO:** WO YO MI LOO,  
They have called us, ah!

WO YO MI.  
They have called us.

YE-HO-VA HU TJE GA- DO  
je-ho-va him-self has assigned

DO. WO YO MI.  
the work They have called us.

**CHORUS** WO YO MI LOO,  
They have called us, ah!

WO YO MI.  
They have called

JE-HO-VA HU TJE GA- DO  
je-ho-va him-self has assigned

DO WO YO MI.  
the work. They have called us

Accompanying Double Bell

by Husunu Afadi (1921 - 1969) as sung by S.K.Ladzekpo at New Paltz, N.Y., U.S.A., Mar. 1970. Trans. by H. Pantaleoni.

Example 2. "NYAZI LA WO NUKU": by Husunu Afadi, as sung by his brother, S.K.Ladzekpo, April 14th, 1970, at New Paltz, and transcribed by H.Pantaleoni. Vertical lines represent strokes on the accompanying forged iron bell, which have values as shown at line 1.

**A**

1. *MM 109* **Solo: NYAZI LA WO**  
*This news is*

2. NU - KU HEH  
*remarkable, oh!*

3. NYA-E LA WO  
*This news is*

4. NU-KU: A - TSI-TSA LE DJWO- FE NE YE-VUWO  
*remarkable: Atsitsa has worked for the white people*

5. FE GE -DEE FI-FIA WO-XO PE-NSIO  
*many years; now he is pensioned.*

6. -NI WO GBO VA A-FE GE NE YA-  
*He has come home in order to stay*

7. NJA AFE LA SEN NE YA-DE MO-DJA-KA NE  
*Home for a while, to be company for his*

8. YE-FO ADO-NU BE GBE-ZE-KA WO KLE-E  
*big brother. Adonu says that one day he told his*

9. -FO BE -NA YA YI-DE KE-DZE-BI NE  
*brother it was time he went to Kedzebi*

Form: A (lines 1 thru 40)  
B (lines 42 thru 67)  
B (lines 43 thru 67)  
A (lines 3 thru 40)

"/": shows the taking of a breath.

"WO": the "o" sounds like the "a" in "law".

"WOXO" (line 5): the "x" is the German "ch" in "noch".

"FE": the "F" is formed with both lips.

"worked": Atsitsa was a surveyor for the government.

"white people": all gov. work is called white man's work, regardless of who runs it.

"DEE": the "D" is formed with the tongue back.

"home": the town of Anyako in southeastern Ghana, also the home of the composer of this song, who was related to Atsitsa.

"SEN": the "n" is our "ng".

"big brother": older brother

"Adonu": Husunu Afadi, the composer of this song.

"he": Atsitsa.

"KLE": the "a" adds nasalization to the vowel.

"Kedzebi": a town to the north.

10. YA-GBO and back, NE YA-DZI TE-FEA-DE-A-DA-DI to find some place [for his business];

11. SUR-VE-YOR DJ ME-NO-A-FA-ME-WO In order to find surveying work, one could not stay at home.

12. VO-ME KO MIE-LE TELEGRA We were surprised when a telegram

13. -ME VADO BE-NA-A-TSI-TSA KU-VI DZIE-SO came that read: "Atsitsa has died, gone to eternity."

14. ALE-DZI-MU LE-A-VI-DZI HAA YO-MA- Aledzimu is weeping oh! Yomawu

15. -WU LE-A-VI-DZI A-GBA-WO-KA-E FA-VI MLJ'A- is weeping. Agbawoka wept and lay

16. -NYI-GBA BE "KU WU-NA FO-VIA HEE" on the ground, saying: "Death killed small brother, oh!"

17. ADO-NU BE-A-DE-BI HA YI-FE Adonu says that Adebi also, in his

18. SU-SU TO-TO NEYIATSITSO-GE WO- mind mixed up, on going for a stick would take

"home": Anyako

"WO-O": the "w" is a very soft one that does not separate one vowel from the next.

"Aledzimu": Atsitsa's elder sister.

"Yomawu": his younger sister.

"Agbawokae": his youngest sister.

"small brother": although she was younger, he was the younger of the two brothers (see lines 7-8).

"Adebi": Atsitsa's elder brother.

19. -TSO KA a rope, NE-YI KA TSO-GE or going for a rope, WOA-YIA would take

20. TSO-A-TSI a stick, WO-GBLOE NE-A-DZI-GBLI BE He told Adigbli that, NE-VA he should

21. YI-DE KO-NUA go to Ko-nu, NE WOAYIA YO and call, BE-DZRA Bedzra

22. DA NYEA-DE VA-A-FA-GBO, NE DA NYEA-DE VA-A-FA-GBO, NE DA NYEA-DE VA-A-FA-GBO, NE and tell him a message has reached home, and he should

23. -VA NE WOA-SI come hear it; that, TELEGRA-ME ME-KA-A-PA-TSOWO Telegrams do not lie.

24. O NYEA ME LE-A-GBE-A-LEA "I am alive like this, but, ATSI-TSA Atsitsa

25. KU-E "died." FIE-WO GA-E-WO-ME-A "In the evening, at ten o'clock, a lorry

26. DZE arrived. SI-KPE SE-NA-YAWO LE "Sikpe Senaya was also in the lorry.

27. ME A-LE-O TOR-SUWO LE "Leo Torsu was also in the lorry.

"ATATSOWO": the "T" is formed with both lips.

"I am alive": Adebisi was himself a sick man.

"lorry arrived": in Anyako, carrying the body'

38. ME KE-DJE-EBI NYO-MUWO ED DEWO  
Women from Kadjebi were together

29. NJU TSI LE-O DE'A-MA-NIA BE "NUA-DZO"  
with them. Leo narrated the story: "This sickness

30. KPA-TA KO KPE KU KE-MAWO A-FJ-DZI KO MIE  
came suddenly and death with it. That is why we have come."

31. -LE" HEE. CHORUS: VAWO-LIE DE'A  
ah! Death has

32. -ME-NU NJU-TO KU WU-NA A-TSI-TSA DE VE-  
overpowered man too much. Death killed Atsitsa in the

33. -DO-ME MA-LI-FA LE'A-VI-DZI A-GA-NO  
-dome. Malifa was weeping and was

34. GBJ GBJ-M BE-NA "NA-NE-KE ME-LE MIA  
saying: "Nothing for us

35. WO NJU-O A-TSI-TSA GBJ BE 'YA-YO TSI NE'A-  
goes well. Atsitsa said he'd bring piped water to

36. -NYA-KOAWO KU-DZI-SUA WU-NA"  
Anyako. Great Death killed him."

"why...come": literally,  
"why we are afoot."

"VEDOME": a term for the  
hinterland.

"MALIFA": Atsitsa's niece.

"us": that is, "our family"

"piped water": Anyako now  
has this, and the  
installation of it is the  
subject of another song by  
Husunu Afadi.

37. A-GBA-WO-KA LEA-VI-DZI HA "NE DZRE  
*Agbawoka weeps, saying "He prepares*

38. TE JEA-DO DI NA-MI MI KA-TA-ME  
*a place over there for us. We are all*

39. GBO-NA HEE YO-ME NU-GGEEA-MEA-DE ME-  
*coming, oh! The journey to the grave no one*

40. -GGE HEE"  
*refuses, oh!"*

41.

**B**

42. SOLO: MIAWO YE-VA-VO VIA-  
*We are Yevars people.*

43. -WO MA-DE KPO NU-NYUI NE-NE HE-ND  
*If someone sees a nice thing, give it to the composer,*

44. HEE MA-DE KPO TSI NYO NE-NE HE-ND  
*oh! If someone sees water that's good, give it to the composer.*

45. A-TSI-TSA FE KU-KU LA'A-DE-BI-  
*Since Abitsa's death, Adeli*

"AGBAWOKA": the youngest sister.

Here ends section A of the song. It is repeated at the end.

Here begins section B, which will be repeated.

"YEVAVO": the name of the dance club for which this song was composed. Husumu Afadi was lead drummer, and composer, for this club.

Repeat of section B begins here with "MADE..."

"give it to the composer": in return for whatever the listener feels he has received by hearing this song.

46. *E* ZU *DO*-*NO* *FE* *GE*-*DEWO* 'YA ME-  
has become a sick man. For many years he has not

47. -GA *KPI* *F**3*-*F**3*WO O *VIAWO* *DZE*'A-*G**B*A-*G**B*A HA  
gotten out of bed. His children have tried helping

48. *DE* WO*G*LO *DO*-*LE* MA-*F**3* *KPLE* *KUE*  
but in vain. Sickness, not rising and death

49. *LE* *ADO*-*NU* *BE* "G*B*E-*DE*-*KA* NYEA ME-  
are one. Adonu said, "One day"

50. *ML**3*'A-*NYI* A *A*-*TSI*-*TS*A A *LE* 'F*3*WO*A*-  
lay down. [I saw] Adonu take his brother's

51. -*BO* *DE*'A-*SIA*-*LA* *YE*'WO-*VA*-*FO* *VO* NA-  
arm in his hand, and they knocked at my door.

52. -*M* *A**DE*-*B*'*E* *FO* *IK**3*-*DO* *NE*'A-*DO*-*NU*  
Adoni called out the name for Adonu.

53. HA *WO* *GB*LOE *BE* *NYE*-*HA* MA-*FUI* *DO* NA-  
He said I should also call his name

54. -*YE* *KE* *NYEA* MA-*FUI* *DO* *NAYE*'A-*GO*-*IZUI*  
for him. And I called it for him." Hobbling

"brother": the sick Adebí.

"called out": literally "drummed", meaning that the name used was the one by which Adonu was known on the talking drum.

"name": drum name.

55. ME TSIA GBS WO O A GO-DZUI TSI GBS LA A-ZO-LI-  
never tried a goat. If hobbling, tried a goat walking

56. A TSI KO-KLOA TO GO-DO MA E DZRO  
would lie a chicken. the grass beyond the river

57. GBS ME-BU GE O "YEA - DZE'A-VLI-ME MD-DZIA  
always looks greener. "I am on my way to Eternity"

58. LOO " YE WO-WO BY-E BY-E NA-MI  
and he waved goodbye to me".

59. HA ATSI-TSA KALE ADE-BI LWOWO DA-DA-  
Atsitaa and Adeli, they make brotherhood

60. VI LE YO-ME NYA-ZI-LA ZUJA-VI-WO  
in death. This word has become a weeping

61. NYA HEE  
word, oh!

62. chorus: O O AFE-TSI SO-KRO-LI FE-ME  
Oh, the house of Afetri Sokpoli, a house that was

63. GAA MA FI-FIA NE-FI-TO DE-KA KOE MA  
great Now only Nefito remains

"the grass": an equivalent English phrase, not a literal translation.

"he": Aqebi, who in fact did die soon after, as foretold in this dream.

"NEFITO": the last male member of the family.



64. *KPO-TO* *NYS-NUWO* *BO-DE* *NU* *KPA-KPLE*  
*with the women* *together* *with*

65. *DE-VIWO* *HEE* *KUE* *KPE NU-*  
*their children* *oh!* *Death* *conquers all*

66. *-DZIE* *GA-TSIE* *WU-NA-A-DE-BIWO* *HEE*  
*things* *Death* *killd* *Adchi* *oh!*

67.

(end of section B; first time, repeat section B from "MADE" in staff 43; second time, return to beginning and sing to staff 41).