

## **DDD Music Analysis, Group Dances, *Baamaaya***

### Cultural Significance

Unlike all other items of repertory in this collection, the Baamaaya dances have no long history story, nor any profound deeper meaning. Alhaji explains that it is simply a playful dance of happiness. Originally, the joy came from a rainfall that ended a long drought. Today, it is a joking dance in which dancers wear comic costumes and the drum language often features ribald humor. For example, the meaning of a luja phrase in Maze is, "I am older than the goat, but the goat had sex before me."

### **General Overview of the Music**

#### Form

Like the other Group Dances, Baamaaya is a medley of separate pieces that are performed one after the other. Naa Daa functions as the "coming in" or processional piece. Dancers are arrayed in a line as they move in rather relaxed fashion towards the performance area. Once the dancers have formed a circle on the dancing area, the lead luja player signals for Baamaaya itself. The energy level increases dramatically as the music intensifies and the dancers begin doing Baamaaya's characteristic hip shimmy movement. From here, the order of pieces is not fixed. Alhaji usually plays Maze and then Nyayboli. Alhaji usually places Dakoli Kutokɔ, the bumping dance, at the end of the medley and returns to Baamaaya as the "going out" or off stage music.

The medley form enables new sections to be added to Baamaaya. Alhaji's purpose for this site is to document the living tradition of Dagomba dance drumming as he played it during his youth and adulthood. Thus, he did not demonstrate sections of Baamaaya that he would consider "things the youth have recently added." For him, the five sections presented here are the heritage as he came to know it as a youngster and as it developed during his prime years as a traditional artist in Dagbon and professional drummer with the Ghana National Folkloric Company (see Life Story).

#### Lead-Response Interplay

Unlike all other types of dance drumming on this site, Baamaaya is the only one that does not have an answer luja part. There are only two drumming parts in the ensemble--lead luja and lead guŋ-gɔŋ (usually played by two drummers). Naturally, this sparse

instrumentation yields an "open," "transparent" musical texture made up of two simultaneous lines.

The two musical lines relate to each other in several ways--conversational call-and-response, contrapuntal interlock, and less frequently, unison overlap. Often the simultaneous talks of the two drums blend these qualities of ensemble relationship. In other words, one portion of the duet may have back-and-forth exchange, another may be in unison, and yet another may have intense meshing of notes.

The luṅa is the leader of the ensemble. However, Baamaaya stands out from other items of repertory presented here in that both drums simultaneously create variations and improvisations within stylistic limits and traditional guidelines of musical good taste. The piece requires attentive listening between players.

Not included in this presentation is the rattle part (sayelum). The rattle's rhythm is modeled on the chahira strokes of the guṅ-gṅ. The instrument, which has loud volume and distinctive sound quality, adds a strong flavor to the music.

#### Meter

All sections of Baamaaya are in quaternary time.

END