

DDD Music Analysis, Praise Names: *Dambobugo*

Overview

Musically, Dambobugo resembles Zim Taai Kulga in its rhythm, Tampima Dundonj in its form, and Suligu in its call-and-response (see Rhythm Notation). Like Zim Taai Kulga, Dambobugo is in ternary time with a sixteen beat time cycle. Like Tampima Dundonj, the lead luja and response themes order the eight duple measures into a 5 + 3 balance. Like Suligu, which is in quaternary time, the form of call-and-response in Dambobugo is interlaced, that is, within the response theme the lead luja injects short figures that engage the answer luja and guŋ-gonj in back-and-forth exchange.

In its meaning, Dambobugo is more affirmative and less aggressive than many other Praise Names. It praises Savelugu-naa Bukali Kantamparum, a son of Naa Yakubu, as a generous provider to his family, telling them to "Eat and be satisfied."

Meter

The time cycle of Dambobugo is forty-eight fast values (eighth notes) that are felt in sixteen ternary beats that we group into eight duple measures of staff notation.

Form and Call-and-Response

In Dambobugo the lead luja phrases begin within the first beat of the temporal cycle and move to their cadence on the backbeat of the third measure. The response theme opens and closes with a three-beat motive, using the intervening three-measure interval to trade short figures with lead luja.

Phrase Duration

The lead luja phrases of Dambobugo flow busily and without internal pauses through the available time between successive response themes. The response theme played by answer luja and guŋ-gonj, on the other hand, has a choppy phrase design.

Rhythm

Like other Praise Names in ternary time with this sort of formal structure, three-in-the-time-of-two (3:2) features prominently in the rhythm of Dambobugo. In the response theme 2:3 occurs between answer luja's duplets and guŋ-gonj's triplets. In the lead luja

themes, grouping options arise from sets of equal time values (eighth notes) played at brisk tempo. Offbeat or syncopated accentuation is another prominent rhythmic device.

Groove

Given the presence of back-and-forth exchange between lead and response drums, Dambobugo has a somewhat halting quality to its forward motion through musical time. Conversely, like other pieces with this type of arrangement, the trading off generates its own special sense of rhythmic directionality.

Answer Luja

The morphology of the response theme in Dambobugo is ABA--an opening motive (A), followed by two figures that simply mark downbeats (B), and then a return of the opening motive (A). In motive A, the time values of answer luja's drum strokes are exactly identical to Zim Taai Kula (the shorter version, i.e., -'palnim' wɔlim jɛ). In other words, the strokes move in two duplets from one downbeat to the next. The melodic contour is LLLML. However, in order to properly represent the implicit Dagbani text the drummer must be clever with the pressure technique after striking the drum (see Table 1).

Dambobugo din tayi.	Big family, eat and be satisfied.
To to,	Yes, yes,
Dambobugo din tayi.	Big family, eat and be satisfied

Table 1 Dambobugo, drum language of response theme

The A motive--"Dambobugo din tayi"--has five notes, which sound in vocables, "dahan deyan dahan den deyan." Note one--"Dam"--begins on below-low pitch and is squeezed up to low; note two--"-bobu"--begins on above-low pitch and is released down to low; note three--"-go"--is virtually identical to stroke one (see Vocables Notation and Drumming Notation). However, on note four--"din"-- the drum plays a plain mid-pitch stroke that carries strong accentuation because it is not modified with after-bend. After the fifth and final stroke the drummer should release the pressure cords as quickly as possible to make the luja's sound match the glottal fricative in the Dagbani, written with the symbol "ɣ." The rhythmic impact of this complex pressure technique is to separate the duplet time values into short-long figures--notated as two-note figures, sixteenth-

eighth--that speed up the temporal motion and increase the density of the motive's texture.

After sounding motive A, the answer luṣa puts strokes on the downbeats of the next two measures. Here again, Alhaji taught that to sound like the spoken "to" the drum's tone should be prolonged by pressure technique. The theme ends with a repeat of the A motive.

Guṣ-gṵṣ

Like most Praise Names, the guṣ-gṵṣ part in Dambobugo is based on the same Dagbani text as answer luṣa. The two drums basically play in rhythmic unison.

In these demonstrations, Alhaji played the theme with subtle variations (see Vocables and Drumming Notation). Sometimes his drum strokes and vocables closely mirror the syllable structure of the drum language, for example "ka kara ka ki ka" for "Dambobugo din tayi," but he also sets the four syllables of "dam-bo-bu-go" to only three even eighths. When the guṣ-gṵṣ plays even eighths, 3:2 arises with the dotted eighths of answer luṣa. The higher pitch strokes on answer luṣa become "ki" press strokes on guṣ-gṵṣ.

While answer luṣa marks the motion through the temporal cycle with one stroke on the downbeats of measures three and four, most typically guṣ-gṵṣ uses a two-stroke pickup to onbeat figure. This is the characteristic rhythmic figure for chahira passages.

Lead Luṣa

Alhaji gave three drum talks for Dambobugo.

Opening Call

Like all Praise Names, Dambobugo begins with solo drumming from the lead luṣa. Drummers with extensive historical knowledge play for a long time--calling the names of ancestors--before arriving at the praises of particular chief for whom the piece is played. However, in these demonstrations, Alhaji reduced the opening call to its essential minimum, what he called "short play."

For Alhaji, the essential minimum to start Dambobugo was the phrase that identifies Savelugu-naa Bukali Kantamparum as son of Naa Yakubu and then one of his own appellations (see Drumming Notation). The call uses quick stroking on the eighth note pulse with pitch, rapid changes in pressure technique and subtle ornamental figures. Rhythmic grouping derives from these features rather than shapes created by contrasting time values

Drum Talks

Each drum talk fills the three ternary-duple measures between response themes. During the response phrase, the lead drum replies to the downbeat accents of answer luṣa and guṣ-guṣ with a three-stroke figure centered on the backbeat. This lead drum's figure is metrically multi-determinate, in other words, it can be felt "in two" or "in three" (see Figure 1).

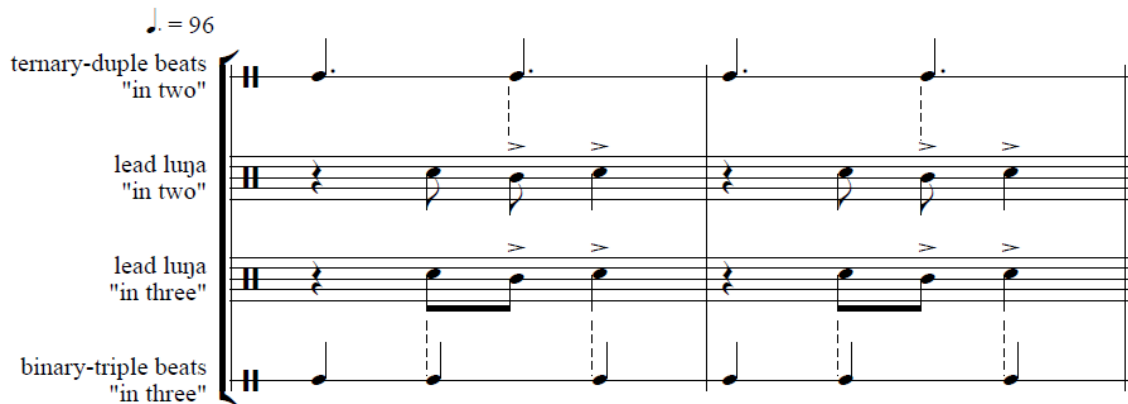


Figure 1 Dambobugo, lead luṣa fill figure felt "in two" and "in three"

The drum talks of Dambobugo employ sets of eighth notes--"Kɔnkushema siyri kulga"-- or sets of dotted eighths--"Kulchibo, kulkulchibo." "Kɔnkushema" begins with ten strokes of equal time value that acquire their rhythmic shape primarily by contrasts of pitch. The phrase suggests the following heterometric progression of accents (see Figure 2).

♩ = 96

metric rhythm

lead luḡa
"Kɔnkushema"

dan din den den dan dan den den dan dan de - yan zin dan

Figure 2 Dambobugo, lead luḡa, accentuation in "Kɔnkushema"

The pattern of accentuation in "Kulchibo," on the other hand, stays within the duple metric frame even though its string of seven dotted eighth notes puts the intensity of 2:3 into the music's rhythm.

When demonstrating "Alkali" in vocables, Alhaji mostly used eighth note time values but when playing the drum his "sharp hand" introduced a more varied palette of note values--sixteenth, eighth, dotted eighth, and quarter notes. When written without the after-bends of pressure technique and beamed to the rhythm of the strokes rather than the implicit ternary, the offbeat accentuation in the phrase is more clearly seen (see Figure 3). In notation, the tremolo bars mean a two-stroke rolling ornament that softens the effect of the stroke in comparison to the regular strokes. Thus, the stroke on the downbeat of measure two does not forcefully emphasize that metric position.

♩ = 96

lead luḡa

Al - kal - li so - li bili - mo - ri Njun' ti zor' m-pahi - li

Figure 3 Dambobugo, lead luḡa, accentuation in "Akalli"

Coming after this elusive, offbeat phrase, the response theme feels especially hard driving.

END