

DDD Music Analysis, Praise Names, *Jerigu N-Dari O Salima*

Overview

"Jerigu," as I will nickname this Praise Name, conveys a wholesome message, "Respect from the community is better than riches for yourself." As the History Story of Kar-naa Ziblim relates, however, the story of this piece is full of the intrigue among royal families that seems so characteristic of chieftaincy in Dagbon.

Musically, the piece uses three-in-the-time-of-two like Damba Sochendi and Dɔɣu Tuli and, like Zambalantɔŋ, it grooves intensely at mid-tempo with tightly interlocking relationships among the three parts.

Meter and Rhythm

Jerigu is in ternary time with a temporal cycle of eight beats, notated within four duple measures. The answer luŋa moves in 3:2 ratio (quarter notes : dotted quarter notes) while the guŋ-gɔŋ accentuates the feeling of the ternary beats. The rhythmic accentuation of the lead luŋa's drum talks shifts among several time feels and the placement of its phrases in relationship to the response parts moves around within the music's temporal cycle.

Tempo

In terms of beats per minute, Alhaji's demonstrations ranged from a rather slow 118 bpm to the almost fast 144 bpm. The piece often feels fast, however, due to the interlocked relationship among the parts. In other words, its dense texture gives it a fast pace.

Form, Call-and-Response and Phrase Duration

"Jerigu" has a straightforward alternation between the themes of the lead and response drums (see Rhythm Notation). Although the lead drum themes have different durations, in general we can say that the call and its response are of equal duration, each filling twelve fast pulses. More often than not, the lead themes are slightly longer than the response.

Groove

Guᅇ-gᅇᅇ marks the fundamental ternary time, which is crossed by the binary beats of answer luᅇa (quarter notes). The lead luᅇa phrases fit within this rhythmic structure in a variety of ways that intensify the overall groove of the music.

Answer Luᅇa

The accented notes made by the stick strokes move in a 3:2 ratio with the implicit ternary beats. Three-in-the-time-of-two is phrased 2 3 1 2 3 1, giving the part a strong sense of forward motion toward the time-points when both beat streams coincide. The melody undulates upward from mid-pitch and then downward to settle on low-pitch (see Vocables Notation and Drumming Notation). After-stroke notes produced by pressure technique not only confer graceful subtlety to the melody but also add a faster secondary pattern to the rhythm of the part (see Figure 1).

The figure shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled "answer luᅇa stick strokes only" and the bottom staff is "answer luᅇa stick strokes and pressure notes". A tempo marking "♩ = 120" is at the top left. The notation consists of a series of notes with accents (>) and brackets above them. The bottom staff includes additional notes representing pressure notes, which are smaller and occur after the main notes.

Figure 1 Jᅇgiru, answer luᅇa phrase, rhythm with and without notes from pressure technique

Guᅇ-gᅇᅇ

In comparison to the answer luᅇa part, whose motion is in 3:2 with the implicit ternary beats, the guᅇ-gᅇᅇ part accentuates Jᅇrigu's fundamental ternary beat groove. The phrase is built from two motives--a first motive that uses loud center strokes followed by a second motive consisting of quiet chahira strokes (see Vocables Notation and Drumming Notation). Within the duple framework used on this site, the center-stroke motive moves over four beats from backbeat towards downbeat--2 1 2 1. If I had used quadruple time signature (equivalent to 12/8), the motion would be 2 3 4 1. At the level of beats, the guᅇ-gᅇᅇ part confers emphasis to the backbeats and at the level of faster pulses (eighth

notes) the rhythm consistently used pickup-to-onbeat figures--daDA, which is particularly evident in the sticking pattern in the chahira stroke motive.

Taken together, the answer luḡa and the guḡ-gəḡ make manifest the composite rhythm of binary and ternary beats (see Figure 2).

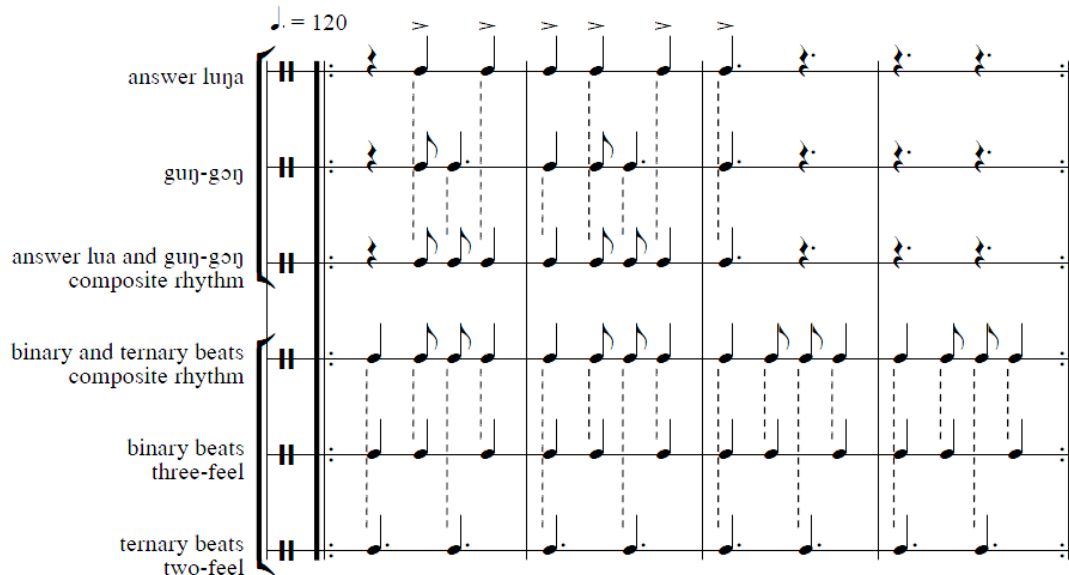


Figure 2 Jərigu, guḡ-gəḡ and answer luḡa, composite rhythm

Lead Luḡa

The lead luḡa part in Jərigu nicely illustrates the way that its preset drum talks have the potential to change the overall rhythmic texture of the ensemble. In a manner that seems improvisatory, the lead drummer links to the phrases of the other drums in ways that create different relationships. This suggests that exploring the potential of the other parts in the ensemble is among the musical goals of the lead drum part. This action on the lead drum is not improvisation but a result of the drum talks that are traditionally associated with the piece.

Alhaji demonstrated four drum talks, plus the opening call. In order to clarify the way Alhaji uses the pre-established material to improvised a lead drum line, I include a note-for-note transcription of his vocables demonstration.

Opening Call

The short form of the opening call demonstrated by Alhaji draws from two of the drum talks (see Drum Language and Drumming Notation). Line two of the call is identical to "Kulili bayā," with the addition of two words, "ni kulga," that emphasize that the water bug is in a river. The call ends with the lead drum's portion of the main proverb that recalls the history story of Kar-naa Ziblim, "Foolish man buys gold, wise man buys respect."

Drum Talks

The main feature of the drum talk "Jërigu n-dari o salima" is its alignment with the flow of 3:2 in the answer luḡa part (see Vocables Notation and Drumming Notation). Since the lead drum comes before the answer drum, it is accurate to say that the answer luḡa continues the series of quarter note beats that is started by the lead luḡa. The temporal location of the high-pitched first stroke in the drum talk draws attention to third time-points within beats. Not only is this time-point regularly marked in the flow of quarter note time values, but it also is an structural feature of Alhaji's improvised vocable demonstration (see measures 26-30, Vocables Transcription). We observe that time-point 1.3 can be understood both as the third and last position within the first ternary beat in a duple measure, or the first time-point in the second binary beat. Thus, this drum talk suggests both offbeat accentuation and 3:2.

The drum talk "Nḡunda bi yo ku landa" consists of two motives of three long time values linked by a short stroke--2 2 2 1 2 2 2 (eighth quarter quarter, eighth quarter quarter). The phrase is set within the time cycle so that final three quarter notes flow directly into the answer luḡa phrase. Put differently, the drum talk begins right after the last note in the answer part, moving on the upbeat of the quarter notes until the eighth note stroke "flips" the lead part onto the onbeats. This talk illustrates the way lead and answer luḡa parts can echo each other, repeating key features with small but musically effective difference.

"Kulili bayḡa neḡla la" shares rhythmic and melody qualities with "Jërigu n-dari o salima" but is sufficiently different to convey a very different implicit meaning in drum language (see Figure 3). Accentuation in "Kulili" stays in ternary time, either on onbeats-

-beats one, two and one in measures two and three--or on offbeats--time-point 1.3 in measure one and time-point 2.2 in measure two.

Figure 3 shows two staves of lead luḡa. The top staff has lyrics "Jeri -gu n-dari o - sali - ma" and the bottom staff has lyrics "Kuli -li bay -ga ney - la la". The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The notation includes accents and slurs.

Figure 3 J̕rigu, lead luḡa, comparison of "J̕rigu" and "Kulili"

"Gbunḡbiri l̕li m-bala la" dramatically introduces a new rhythmic dimension to the music--duplet motion within ternary beats (dotted eighth notes). These time values create 2:3 with the ternary accents of ḡuḡ-ḡoḡ and 4:3 with the flow of quarter notes beats in the answer luḡa part. The melody of "Gbunḡbiri l̕li" also is unique--M M H H.

There is one more feature of the lead luḡa part that needs discussion--quiet filler notes. As heard and shown in his vocables demonstration, typically Alhaji filled time during the response with very low-pitched strokes. Begun on ternary beat two, this series of strokes uses quarter note time values that precisely interlock with the accented strokes of the answer luḡa. The result is a fast, exciting back-and-forth (see Figure 4). When one drumstick is flying towards the drum skin, the other is bouncing away in the opposite direction. When drummers are in close proximity, the sound of tightly interwoven drum strokes creates a tangible sensation on your skin and in your gut. The physical sensation of the drum ensemble's texture guides musicians towards correct performance.

Figure 4 shows two staves. The top staff is labeled "answer luḡa" and the bottom staff is labeled "lead luḡa filler notes". The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. Arrows indicate the interlocking relationship between notes in the two staves.

Figure 4 J̕rigu, lead luḡa filler strokes with answer luḡa phrase

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