Chapter Four
Part-Counterpart: Call and Response

Call and Response Variations (pp. 64-65)

Call-and-response form is a well-known characteristic of the music of West Africa. Throughout the musical cultures of this region, one performer or groups of performers plays or sings first, followed by a second part. The Kpelle of Liberia weave additional complexities around the basic structure of call-and-response, including exchanges among performers, multiple layers of response, and alternating in serving as call and response. This reciprocal format has parallels in the social and political structures of Kpelle society.

Non-overlapping Call and Response (pp. 65-67)

After reading the information contained in pages 65-67, complete the following activities using questions immediately to generate class discussion and provide data for use in completing Handout/Overhead 4.2.

Questions for all selections for use in completing Handout/Overhead 4.2:

AA

1. Describe the call and response sections. Are they similar in length? Do the words remain constant in each or are there variations and improvisations?
2. What type of song? (Work song, epic, love song, game, dance, etc.)
3. Describe any actions such as work accompanied by a work song, dances, games, etc.

CD 10 “Women’s Planting Song”

AA (1-3a, 5-6); S,C/U (4)

1. Listen to “Women’s Planting Song” while lightly tapping pulse.
2. Identify solo and chorus parts by raising right hand for call and left hand for response.
3a. During a second listening, sing choral response on neutral syllables.
3b. During a second listening, sing lyrics “Oi-o-ghene” for choral response.
4. Advanced students may wish to transcribe choral response. Below is one possible way of transcribing this phrase.
5. Discuss activity of preparing field for planting. If possible, locate photographs of workers using short handle hoes in African farming through search of online or print resources. How does a work song facilitate the activity?
6. Invite students to mimic activities of preparing the soil for planting. Students form a single line and slowly move forward to the rhythms of the song pantomimining the actions of loosening the soil.
1. Listen to CD 11 (“Children’s Counting Song”) lightly tapping the steady pulse.
2. Identify entrances by call and response by raising right hand for call and left hand for response.
3. During a second listening, sing the response on neutral syllables.
4. Look at the lyrics and English translation for this song. Identify which lyrics are the call and which are the response.

   English: One, two, three, try it again.
   Kpelle: Tang, veere, zaaba, koila nai-wolo (veere is pronounced veydaeh)

   English: Fence, two, three, try it again.
   Kpelle: Korang, veere, zaaba, koila nai-wolo

   Note: Response is sometimes: Ku koila nai-wolo—let’s trying it again

5. Advanced students may wish to sing lyrics—invite volunteers to serve as soloist and chorus.

**CD 4: “Sala Kpa Kpa” (“The Big, Big Sacrifice”)**
AA (1-3); S, C/U (4-5)

   1. Review discussion and activities on pages 30-35 for CD 4.
   2. Listen to CD 4 while lightly tapping the pulse.
   3. Compare the length of various calls occurring in CD 4.
   4. After reading description of how the soloist indicates that the chorus should sing the response, listen to CD 4 again and identify examples of these techniques.
   5. Discuss how western popular music structures may have influenced this variant of call-and-response form in Kpelle music.
**CD 12: Entertainment Love Song**  
AA (1-3); S, C/U (4-5)

1. Discuss story of the song and how technology plays a role in the narrative.
2. Listen to CD 12 and compare relative length of calls that occur throughout the song.
3. During a second hearing, sing the choral response on neutral syllables.
4. Advanced students may wish to learn percussion accompaniment for performance during subsequent listenings. (Use oral learning process.)
5. Optional: Teacher may wish to compare this song with “Cajun Telephone Stomp” (Performed by Beausoleil on *Cajun Conja*), also a humorous love song mentioning technology in love relationships.

Using the information from “Questions for all selections” (above), complete Handout/Overhead 5.2 to compare the examples of non-overlapping call-and-response. Below is an example of how this Handout may appear when completed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Handout/Overhead 4.2</th>
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<tr>
<th>CALL</th>
<th>RESPONSE</th>
<th>SONG TYPE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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</table>
| **CD 10**  
Rice Planting Song | New text and music improvised every other time; length balanced with response | Music and lyrics constant | Work Song | Loosen topsoil so rice seed will sprout and take root; group of women using hoes to break soil |
| **CD 11**  
Children’s Counting Song | Text and music varied periodically; length balanced with response | Music and lyrics mostly constant | Children’s counting game song | Counting |
| **CD 4**  
Woni Group | Variable length call; chorus entry cued by words or melodic line | Music and lyrics constant | Humorous love song | Determined by circumstances of performance |
| **CD 12**  
Entertainment Love Song | Initial call lengthy; gradually shortens to balance with response | Music and lyrics constant | Humorous love song; mentions technology such as telephone, gramophone, etc. | Unknown |
Overlapping Call & Response (pp. 68-73)

In addition to the more familiar non-overlapping call-and-response form, Kpelle music also includes more complex variations of the structure. Multiple calls and/or responses may occur and the response may become an ostinato above which the call continues as improvisation. Members of the “audience” may also add layers of musical or verbal responses to a performance.

After reading the information contained in pages 68-72, complete the following activities using imbedded questions to generate class discussion

CD 12: “Meni-Pele”
AA (1-6); S,C/U (7)

1. Discuss the similarities and differences in structure between the meni-pele and the woi-meni-pele.
2. What is the basic story line of “Meni-pele”?
3. Compare this narrative to similar stories from other cultures.
4. Listen to CD 12 noting the following:
   a. Teaching first choral response to audience (“Go-go-yai go-go-yai go”)
   b. Demonstration of song verse
   c. Demonstration of gun firing vocal effect (“gili-kiting”)
   d. Addition of second choral response (“Ee nomo tolong, ee”)
5. During subsequent listenings of CD 12, sing first choral response.
6. After first response is learned, add second choral response and demonstrate interlocking effect.
7. Advanced students may choose to transcribe the two choral responses. Below are samples of how these phrases may be transcribed.

Handout/Overhead 4.3

Meni-Pele
First Choral Response

\[
\text{go - go - yai go, go yai go}
\]

Handout/Overhead 4.4

Meni-Pele
Second Choral Response

\[
\text{Ee no - mo to - long, ee}
\]
CD 15: Woi Epic, Episode 2  
AA (1-6); S, C/U (7-8)

1. What is the role of the following in the performance of “Woi Epic, Episode 2”?
   a. Epic pourer
   b. Chorus
   c. Song catcher

2. Listen to CD 15 noting the following:
   a. Performance of choral ostinato (“vee mm, vee mm”)
   b. Performance of choral call (“Ka doli e pa-oo”)
   c. Style of singer by epic pourer
   d. Accompaniment played on bottles

3. Describe the singing style of the epic pourer? What styles of western singing does it resemble?

4. How were audience members selected to serve in specific roles during the performance of “Woi Epic, Episode 2”?

5. Learn both the choral ostinato and choral call through oral transmission. Assign students to these groups and perform these parts during subsequent listenings.

6. Identify repeated patterns played on bottles and perform accompaniment during subsequent listenings.

7. Advanced students may wish to transcribe rhythms played on bottles. Below are two possible patterns identified during a class project.

   **Handout/Overhead 4.5**

   ![Possible Bottle Rhythms](Image)

8. Discuss the dialogic pairings of performers in the Woi Epic. Do similar dialogic relationships exist in other musics? Give examples.

CD 7: Giing  
AA

1. Review information and activities for CD 7 on pages 50-52.
2. Listen to CD 15 focusing upon the additional interaction of sounds created by calls, responses, and addition of “Owl raising people”
3. Discuss the overlapping nature of these interactions.
Other Part-Counterpart Relationships (pp. 74-78)
S, C/U

After reading the information on pages 74 through 78, use the following questions to stimulate class discussion. Alternatively, the teacher may divide the class into groups and assign a major heading Resonance, Gifts That Keep the Performance Going, Chief Counterpart, Poro-Sande) to each group for research, discussion, and class presentation

1. How is the parallel part-counterpart relationship applied in Kpelle instrumental performance?
2. Identify and explain ways in which the audience may become involved in a performance other than singing in the chorus. Are there similar practices in other musical traditions?
3. In what ways is the part-counterpart relationship manifested in Kpelle social and political systems? Are there examples of this type of relationship in the social and political systems of other cultures?
4. Explain how the roles played by the Poro and Sande societies within Kpelle culture illustrate the principle of part-counterpart.