overthrow, much less the apparently genuine rejoicing as the news reached the streets. The book is a useful supplement to, but does not replace, John Pobee's *Kwame Nkrumah and the Church in Ghana 1949-66* (Accra: Asempa, 1989).

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Agawu's book not only offers an insightful description of musical expression among the—comparatively little-studied—Northern Ewe and Akpafu, but also issues a challenge to current ethnomusical theories of African music which view drumming as the site of the genesis of rhythm, and approach music as a rather isolated field of study. By contrast, Agawu starts out with a vivid account of the 'rhythms of society', whereby he leads his readers through the changing soundscape of an ordinary day with its abundance of rhythms generated by sources as diverse as church bells, car horns, children's clapping game songs, women pounding fufu, carpenters hammering nails, and girls advertising iced-water in the market.

Attempting to bring some conceptual order into this complex soundscape, Agawu develops a model for the conceptualization of the domain of rhythmic expression. This highly original model is based on the assumption that rhythmic expression originates in gesture and is subsequently generated in speech (Ewe is a highly tonal, melodic language), song, instrumental music (the main instruments being drums and bells) and dance (e.g. stylized gesture). In the remainder of the book, Agawu discusses the rhythms of these expressive forms as they are being practised in everyday life. The accompanying CD track offers 31 music examples, many of which are discussed in the text. For students of religion in Africa chapters 4, 5 and 6, which are devoted to drumming and dancing and their performance, will be of special interest. In the epilogue, the author criticizes the still current view that African music should not (or cannot) be represented through Western staff notation and tonic solfa (of which he himself makes ample use throughout the book). Agawu dismisses the search for an essentially 'African' musical heritage and rather emphasizes the enormous 'creativity by African
musicians in domesticating, or otherwise appropriating, the most “alien” modes of representation’ (p. 187).

Throughout the book, Agawu emphasizes this creativity, through which any crude opposition of traditional versus modern becomes obsolete. As he convincingly argues, in the performance of the changing rhythms of everyday life what once was modern may become tradition and vice versa. Although I welcome this refreshing approach, I have some doubts with regard to his largely implicit suggestion that new and old musical styles would easily blend in everyday practice. Having conducted historical and ethnographic research in the same area as Agawu, next to the blurring of Western and African styles described by him, I also encountered resolute attempts to keep ‘heathen’ and ‘Christian’ musical styles apart. It took decades until the African church music composed by Ephraim Amu (to whom Agawu refers in passing) from the 1930s onwards was accepted in the Protestant mission church. During my fieldwork in Peki in the early 1990s, many Christians would still not accept the introduction of certain drums and rhythms into church and many criticized me for participating in the dance and drumming performances for the local gods. In fact, Agawu himself states that, being a pastor’s son, prior to his research he never witnessed Adabatràn, ‘the most serious of Northern Ewe dances’ and an essential part of ‘traditional’ religious practice (pp. 96ff.). In the same vein, both the colonial and postcolonial state implement(ed) a certain politics of music: the British administration, for example, forbade a number of dances because they were related to forbidden cults, the current National Democratic Congress-government favours ‘traditional’ drumming and dancing above syncretic musical forms such as highlife. In short, it is too simple to represent music merely as an easily accessible field of syncretic creativity. It clearly also forms a source of religious and political power and hence an arena of struggle. Agawu’s analysis would certainly have benefited from a more sociological focus on the politics of music and the concomitant power struggles. Such an approach might also have led him towards an appreciation of audiences’ reactions to musical performances, a dimension which is virtually missing in the book.

Despite these shortcomings, I regard Agawu’s book as an important contribution to Northern Ewe ethnography and ethnomusicological theory. Approaching rhythm and music as part and parcel of everyday life and avoiding unnecessary technical jargon, the book is interesting and accessible for a broad readership—a true ear-opener which resonates with the all-pervasive rhythms in everyday life and which urges