



## **Brahms the African, Kwashie the German**

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First I appropriate a mode of representation designed by an African theorist for the analysis of a performance by Collins Kwashie (Ghanian master drummer), and apply it to music by Johannes Brahms (German master composer). Then I appropriate a mode of representation designed by an American theorist for the analysis of a composition by Brahms, and apply it to a performance by Kwashie.

Anku 2000 notes that Ewe drummers interpolate grouping dissonances amidst metric cycles. Characteristically, a drummer proceeds part-way through a metric cycle; begins a displaced cycle that divides the cyclic span in a different way (e.g. into 4 rather than 3); and then resumes the initial cycle where it left off. Willie Anku models these interpolated cycles geometrically via circle graphs. A similar interplay of grouping and displacement dissonance, in the music of Brahms, has been noted by American theorist Samuel Ng. I analyze some moments from the first movement of Brahms's F-minor Piano Sonata, Op. 5, applying the modes of representation developed separately by Anku and Ng.

Cohn 2001 identifies 19th-century European compositions that employ complex hemiolas —the simultaneous or successive layering of 3:2 grouping dissonances at different lead of a metric hierarchy — whose interaction is modeled by a two-dimensional matrix called a "ski-hill graph." A similar interplay of complex hemiolas in the drumming of Kwashie suggests an application of ski-hill graphs, and a conception of metric space isomorphic to ones navigated by Schumann, Brahms, and Dvorak.