Bolowi

WAP-pages / Paul Nas / last updated on 7 November 2018

Bolowi is an adaptation of a melody originally played on the Bolon by the Senufo from the Korhogo region. It starts with an call with six measures instead of the normal four sizes. That implies that you have to start on the third measure with your call. It’s is played with a four-quarters feeling, while the rhythm itself is three-quarters. Do not play the bell straight: the 2nd strike with 40% instead of 33.33%. The call is repeated regularly during the rhythm, with an answer coming from the bass section.
The rhythm is ternary but starts with a binary call! This runs over seven measures and starts on the third beat. The bass drums fall in with an 'answer' and continue with their basic patterns. Note that the dounoumba remains constant.
The same calll is used to end the rhythm. In this case, the djembé’s stop their patterns on tel 3 and play 2 slap flames at the same time as the answer of the dounouns (on 4 1/3 or 4 1/2 and the next 1). From a theoretical point of view, this rhythm can be regarded as a good example of ternarization (see below). The part of djembé 1 is almost the same as in 'Soli des Manians' except that slaps are shown and vice versa. The 2nd djembé plays to give a ternary 'feeling'. The Sangban plays the rhythm, while the Kenkeni systematically responds to syncopian rhythm. Dounoumba marks the return of the 1st beat. (Thanks to Vincent Manual for this presentation and insight).

Call							S	S	S	S	B		S		B			S	S		B		S				S		B		B
							r	l	r	l	r		r		r			l	r		r		r				r		r		

Djembé 1	B	S	S	B	T		B	S	S	B	T		B	S	S	B	T		B	S	S	B	T	
	r	l	r	l	r		r	l	r	l	r		r	l	r	l	r		r	l	r	l	r	

Djembé 2	S		T	S			S		T	S			S		T	S			S		T	S		
	r		r	l			r		r	l			r		r	l			r		r	l		

djembé				B												⇓	basic patterns										⇓
kenkeni		●		●				●			○			●			○			●			○			●	
				×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×	
sangban		●		●			○			●			○			●			○			●			○		
				×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×	
doundoun				●										●		●										●	
				×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×	

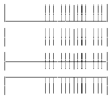
Response																								
Kenkeni											●		●				●			○			●	
											×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×	

Kenkeni		○			●			○			●			○			●			○			●	
	×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×	

Sangban	●			○			●			○			●			○			●			○		
	×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×	

Doundoun	●										●		●										●	
	×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×		×	×	

Notation of this rhythm by Vincent Manuèl:



Here is the (theoretical) quaternary Bolowi (you can play it with the same handing as for the ternary bolowi, and then ternarizate while accelerating, it's a good experience for players, and it seems that it sounds good for the audience, which, even without understanding the phenomenon, feels that something is happening...)

Binary Bolowi (theoretical)

Call									S	S	S	S	B		S	
									r	l	r	l	r		r	
	B			S	S		B		S				S		B	
	r			l	r		r		r				r		r	
	B															
	r															
Kenkeni			❍				●				❍				●	
	x		x		x		x		x		x		x		x	

Sangban	●				❍				●				❍			
	x		x		x		x		x		x		x		x	

Dounodun	●														●	
	x		x		x		x		x		x		x		x	

Djembé 1	B		S	S	B		T		B		S	S	B		T	
	r		r	l	r		r		r		r	l	r		r	

Djembé 2	S			T	S				S			T	S			
	r			l	r				r			l	r			

Source

Vincent Manuel from Mamady Keïta