



Evening Concert Series

2013–2014 Season

Sara M. Snell Music Theater

Sunday, April 27, 7:30 PM

West African Drum and Dance Ensemble
Julie Hunter, director

Martin Kwaku Kwaakye Obeng, guest instructor and artist

Calabash Song Traditional

Atumpan Poetry & Drumming Traditional

Oprenten Improvisations

Agbadza Traditional

Mivua 'Gbo Mayi

Agbae

Dada Ada Do Hee

Kpanlogo Traditional

Calabash Song

Ose Aye

Soweto

Salam Malekum

Cho Boi

Mame Ayekoo

The “**Calabash Song**” is in the Ga language and is part of the *kpanlogo* repertoire. A calabash is a half gourd used for drinking and cooking in West Africa.

For the second piece of the night, **Oprenten Improvisations**, students will showcase the West African hand drumming and improvisation skills that they’ve developed this semester to the accompaniment of bells and shakers.

The next piece, **Atumpan Poetry & Drumming**, is unique in a number of ways. The *atumpan* is a pair of low and high pitched talking drums which originated with the Akan people in southern Ghana and is played in two main ways – the speech and dance modes. It is used today by many ethnic groups throughout this part of West Africa. The *atumpan* drum is capable of communicating phrases of meaning through its imitation of the rhythms and tonal variations of the spoken Akan language. In this way, the *atumpan* literally “speaks”. In this piece, the ensemble will recite phrases of Akan poetry, which will then be played on the *atumpan* (in the speech mode) in succession.

Atumpan Poetry Honoring the River Tano

Asuo twa okwan

Okwan twa asuo

Opani ne hwan?

Asuo twa okwan

Okwan twa asuo

Opani ne hwan?

Yeboo kwan no kattoo asuo no

Asuo no firi tete

Asuo no firi Odomankoma a oboo adee

creator

Konkon Tano

Brefa Tano

Asuo brekete

Agya Kwaa Ata ei!

Asu berempon

Asuo twa asuo

Takasi berempon

The river crosses the path

The path crosses the river

Which is the elder?

The river crosses the path

The path crosses the river

Which is the elder?

The path was cut to meet
the river

The river is of old

The river comes from
“Odomankoma” the

Konkon Tano

Brefa Tano

Asuo brekete

Father Kwaa Ata ei!

The great river

River that passes a river

Takasi the Great

Woama Bosompra adi afasee

Me nam, me nam, me nam, ma si ta ko mu

Takasi berempon

Frampon damirifa

Damirifa

Damirifa

Damirifa due

Damirifa due

Takasi berempon

Frampon, damirifa

Asu berempon

Frampon damirifa

Damirifa

Damirifa

Damirifa due

Damirifa due

Damirifa due, due, due.

You have caused

Bosompra to eat

the water yam

I have wandered, and

wandered, and wandered,

I have stepped into the

deep floods of Ta

Takasi the great

Frampon, condolence

Condolence

Condolence

Deepest condolence

Deepest condolence

Takasi the great

Frampon, condolence

Great river

Frampon, condolence

Condolence

Condolence

Deepest condolence

Deepest condolence

Deepest, deepest, deepest
condolences.

Agbadza is Ewe war music, which is typically performed in contemporary contexts at funerals. It first developed in the 1700s, and is the most common type of traditional music played today among the Ewe people of southeastern Ghana and southwestern Togo. The themes of songs touch on heroism, leadership, bravery, war, and death. The lead hand drum calls the dancers. The instrumentation includes the *gankogui* (iron double bell), *axatse* (gourd shaker), *toke* (boat-shaped bell), *akpewo* (wooden sticks), *kagan* (small stick drum), *kidi* (medium stick drum), and *sogo* (lead hand drum).

The final piece of the night, *Kpanlogo*, is a Ga recreational genre from the area around the capital city of Accra in southern Ghana typically played at funerals, festivals, and parties. It developed in the 1950s during Ghana's independence period. The song lyrics and dance movements embody the lifestyle of urban West African youth. The lead hand drum calls the dancers. Instrumentation includes *mi* (hand drums), *nonota* (double iron bell), *shakeshe* (gourd shaker), *dodompo* (small iron bell), and *tamalin* (frame drums). The audience is encouraged to join us at the end for this dance.

Martin Kwaku Kwaakye Obeng has visited and worked with the ensemble several times during the semester. He is a well-renowned drummer, composer, dancer, and educator originally from Ghana who has worked internationally for the past 30 years. He began drumming at the age of five, and by seventeen he was appointed Royal Court Drummer to the high chief of the Aburi-Akuapim region of the Eastern Region of Ghana. He toured as a drummer and dancer with Ghana's National Arts Council Folkloric Company, and later moved to the United States where he has continued to perform traditional music of West Africa, in addition to jazz, Latin music, reggae, and different fusions of these styles. He teaches at Brown University, and has shared the stage with such luminaries as Max Roach, Roy Hargrove, Randy Weston, Anthony Braxton, Gideon Alorwoyie, and Obo Addy.

Ensemble Performers:

Aaron Andia
Louisa Carasco
Yoav Cohen
Karen Davila
Katelynn Donohue
Nicole Frederick
Ruben Juarez
Sam Landesberg
Daniel Laskaris
Samuel Lasky
Liam Kingsley
Andrew Pacer
Israel Payero
Kathryn Waters

Additional Guests

Bridgid Bergin Charles Lederer
Samantha Claps Sean Shibata
Clinton Joseph Valerie Vbriaco

Special Thanks:

The Department of Music Theory, History, and Composition, The Department of Music Performance, Dean Michael Sitton, Martin Obeng, Brown University Department of Music, Yaw Atiso, Manavi Deku, Karen Miller, Joshua Emanuel, Gary Galo, Janet Sussman, Elizabeth Sheer, Robert Vadas, Jason Hunter, David Henderson, Jim Petercsak, Jay Pecora, Lorelei Murdie, Kathleen Jandreau, Linda and David Hunter. *Ye da wo ase!*