

Blood Drum Spirit

**drum languages of West Africa,
African-America, Native America,
Central Java, and South India**

By Royal James Hartigan

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Abstract

BLOOD DRUM SPIRIT

drum languages of West Africa,
African-America, Native America,
Central Java and South India

Blood Drum Spirit is a study which focuses on West African and African-American music. The research is conducted through the eyes of master drummers in each tradition and also includes a stylistic history of the drum set in African-American music. Three additional sections treat the adaptation of Native American, Javanese, and South Indian drumming and drum languages to the drum set. The research consists of interviews and performances of music by master artists from each world tradition. These sessions are tape recorded, transcribed and analyzed.

The topics arising from the research on West African and African-American music include timbral and technical parallels; individual rhythmic correspondence and adaptation; the recurring phenomenon of multiple rhythmic perspectives in ensembles; the role of notation; possible methods for the study, performance and teaching of these traditions; moral aspects of the musics and their use; and a personal sense of shared heritage.

In the section on West African music, we investigated 25 traditional pieces, which include recreational, ritual, harvest, warrior, funeral, court, and ceremonial music. We also studied contemporary Highlife drumming.

Javanese drumming patterns are recorded and transcribed, as well as South Indian solkattu phrases and compositions, and the 175 tāla forms of South Indian Karnatak (classical) music.

Percussionists will find that over 900 transcriptions of Native American, Javanese, South Indian, West African and African-American patterns are a multitude of time and rhythmic complexes distributed through the drum set in original and challenging ways which require and promise a high level of mastery.

The result of our efforts is a comprehensive body of musical techniques, styles and theoretical-aesthetic issues, which are assembled for the first time in a systematic and detailed manner. They offer a unique resource to scholars, practicing musicians, and general readers interested in music and culture.

PH.D. WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY (CT., USA) 1986

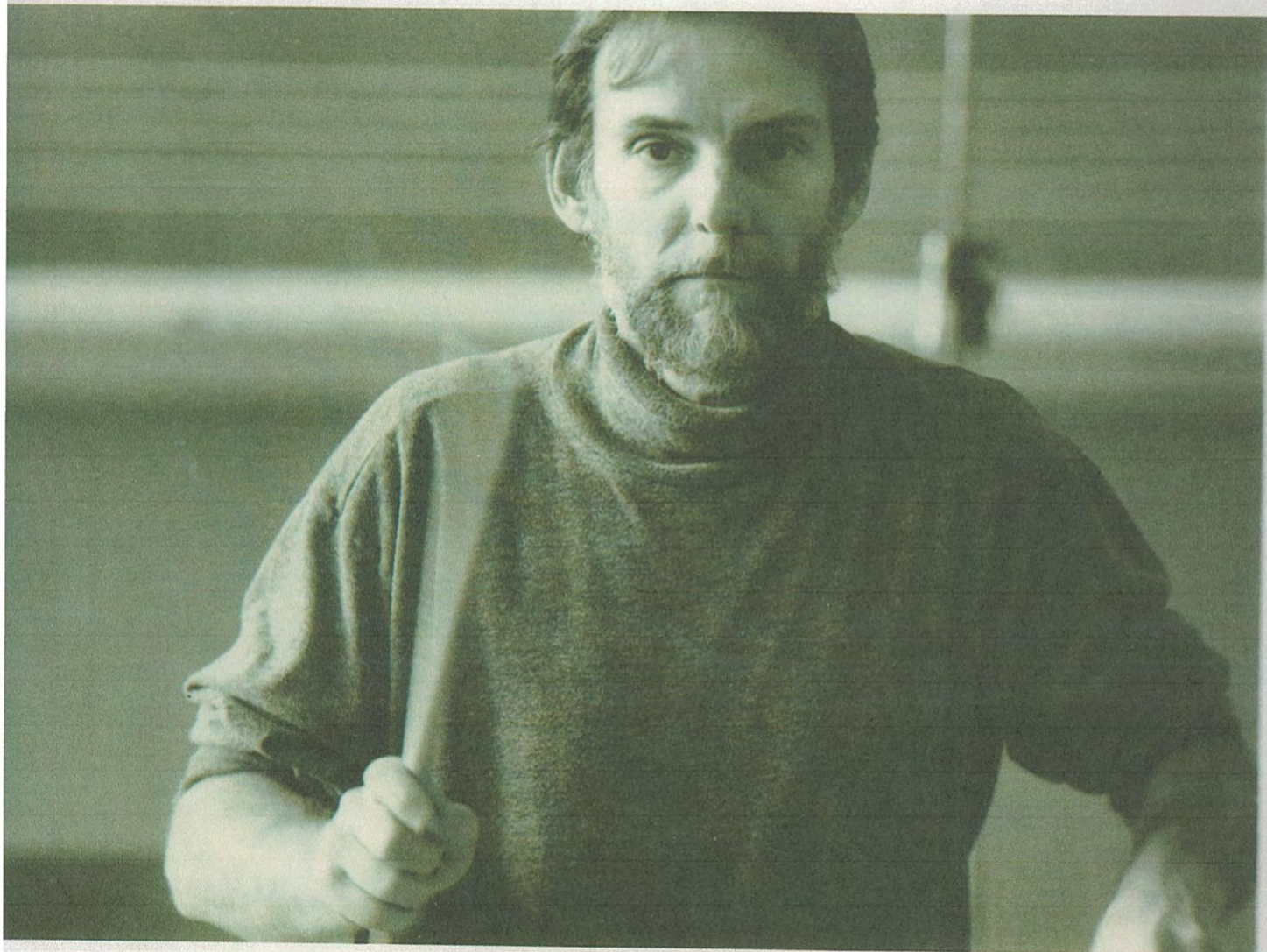


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There are added chapters following chapter 34 (which ends on page 1001) that represent traditional dance drumming pieces we developed following the work's initial presentation in spring 1986. The pages are not numbered and there are currently no audio examples to accompany the text and music notations. They include Chapter 35, Sanga; Chapter 36, Mpintintoa; Chapter 37, Nagla; and Chapter 38, Otufo.

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As quoted in The Face of Black Music, by Valerie Wilmer (1976).

Roaming through the jungle, the jungle of "oohs" and "ahs," searching for a more agreeable noise. I live of life of primitivity with the mind of a child and an unquenchable thirst for sharps and flats. The more consonant, the more appetizing and delectable they are. Cacophony is hard to swallow.

Living in a cage, I am almost a hermit, but there is a difference, for I have a mistress. Lovers have come and gone, but only my mistress stays. She is beautiful and gentle. She waits on me hand and foot. She is a swinger. She has grace. To hear her speak, you can't believe your ears. She is ten thousand years old. She is as modern as tomorrow, a brand new woman every day, and as endless as time mathematics. Living with her is a labyrinth of ramifications. I look forward to her every gesture.

Music is my mistress, and she plays second fiddle to no one.

Duke Ellington

This work would not have been possible without the hours, days, and years of help given to me by Mary Ann Knight of Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Her typing, xeroxing, editing; her physical, financial, and emotional support; and her friendship and love; gave me the means to pursue and complete our book.

I first dedicate this research and performance, and my continued efforts in world music to Mary, for her undying inspiration.



Dedications

I dedicate this work to my drum teachers in the traditions I have studied: Sumarsam, I.M. Harjito, Pak Kanto; Tanjore Ranganathan; David McAllester, Paul Hadzima; Abraham Kobena Adzenyah, Freeman Kwadzo Donkor; Edward Blackwell. I dedicate my efforts to the people of those cultures. To all, I affirm that I will honor what they have given to me.

I dedicate this study to Frank Hartigan, who taught me how to laugh, and to Edward Hartigan, who is among the quick of the Irish. I dedicate this work to Ray Hart, a man who danced with Bill Robinson.

I give this effort to my mother, Hazel Hartigan, and to my father, James Hartigan, whose lives were and are a reflection of the divine in us.

And for the two who will never feel the sun in their faces or the wind at their backs.

To the Source and End of All.



my mother and father



my uncle Ray Hart

my sister Mary Jane Hartigan

a spirit of life and light always



Copyrights and Authorship

For recorded material on audio cassettes and notated musical examples.

Native American Music:

Tape 23, Side B

Mixashawn, Music Keeper of the Pequonawok Canoe Society of the
Alonquin Speaking Mahikanu,
377 Tyron Street South Glastonbury, Connecticut

Javanese Ciblon Drumming:

Sumarsam and I.M. Harjito
c/o Music Department
Wesleyan University
Middletown, Connecticut

South Indian Sokattu:

Tanjore Ranganathan
c/o Music Department
Wesleyan University
Middletown, Connecticut

African-American Drumming:

Edward Blackwell
c/o Music Department
Wesleyan University
Middletown, Connecticut

West African Drumming:

Akan (including Fante, Ashanti and Ahanta-Nzema Music)
Abraham Kobena Adzenyah
c/o Music Department
Wesleyan University
Middletown, Connecticut

Ewe, Ga, Togolese, Ibo-Yoruba, Dahomean (Benin),
Dagarti, Dagomba and Frafra Music
Freeman Kwadzo Donkor

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Wesleyan University
Middletown, Connecticut

For recorded material on audio cassettes, notated musical examples, and text:

Drum set adaptations of rhythms from Traditional Drumming of Native America, Java, South India, West Africa, and African America:

royal hartigan
c/o Music Department
College of Visual and Performing Arts
University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth
285 Old Westport Road
North Dartmouth
Massachusetts, 02747

Tel. (508) 999-8572

Email: royaljhartigan@gmail.com

Websites:

www.royalhart.com
www.blooddrumspirit.com
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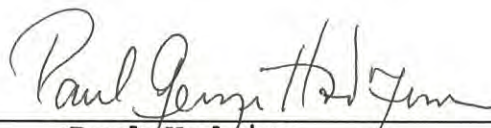
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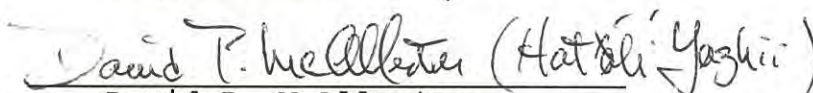
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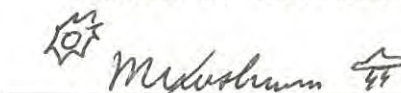
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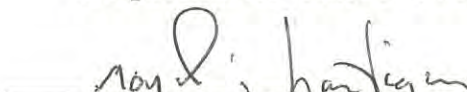
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 Paul Hadzima


 David P. McAllester


 Mixashawn, Music Keeper of the
 Pequonawok Canoe Society


 Royal J. Hartigan

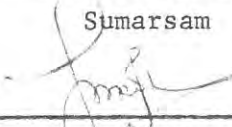
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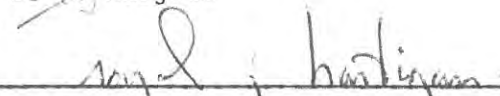
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Sumarsam

I. M. Harjito

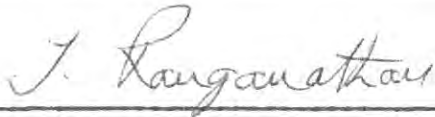
Royal J. Hartigan

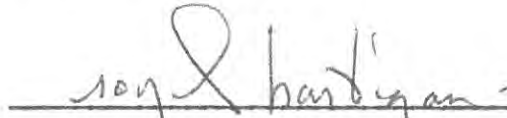
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Tanjore Ranganathan

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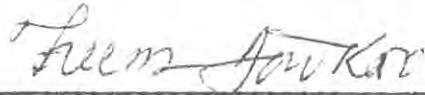

Edward Blackwell
Royal J. Hartigan

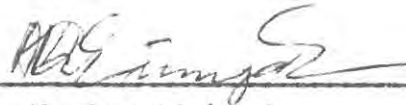
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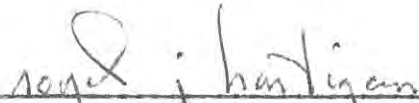
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Freeman Donkor

Abraham Adzinyah

Royal J. Hartigan

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CHAPTER 7 : West African Instruments by Robert Lancefield.

EPILOGUE : People and instruments in the study by Robert Lancefield.

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Preface

There are several aspects of this study, the clarification of which will assist the reader-listener's journey through the tapes, text and notated musical examples. These aspects relate mainly to the arrangement of material, terminology, musical practices, notations and techniques, and references to specific recording sessions and tapes.

A prologue and epilogue in a pictorial form convey different aspects of the study. The Prologue, following the front matter, depicts the life and music of the world traditions studied. The Epilogue at the end of the study shows the people and some of the instruments involved in the research. The Prologue is intended to give the reader a sense of the meaning, feeling and spiritual content of the musics discussed. I feel such an approach is necessary since the musicians in the traditions studied considered these things important. The sections are placed apart from the main body of the work, which is concerned with recording, notation, and analysis of musical structures and interactions. Those who are so inclined may examine the added parts, which will produce a fuller understanding of the body of research in between.

A guide to pronunciation of West African, specifically Ewe and Akan, letters used in this study follows the preface. This guide is not a complete key to Ewe and Akan letters and syllables, but only to those used herein. In this regard, one spelling needs explanation. Although other Ewe words with the "V" sound -- a "V" pronounced with two lips, almost as a "W" -- are written with the underlined V diacritical marking, the word, "Ewe" itself, which is often written in this manner, (Eve), is instead given as "Ewe" and pronounced with a "W". Freeman Donkor, an Ewe, told me that this is acceptable since many Ghanaians pronounce the word in this manner. The first appearance of an Ewe, Akan, Yoruba, Ibo, Javanese, Hindu or Tamil word in a chapter or appendix will be underlined. Succeeding appearances in a chapter or appendix will not be underlined.

Four indexes of notation symbols for drum set are given in this work. Those symbols used for a modified Western staff are found at the end of this section following the guide to pronunciation, while those used in an original graph notation I have

developed for drum set adoptions of South Indian tāla structures are found at the beginning of the section on tāla adaptations (prior to Example 83) within the appendix devoted to South Indian solkāṭṭu (Appendix 4). The drum set adaptations in that appendix prior to Example 83 are represented in a modified Western staff notation. Two other numerical notation systems are described in Appendix 1.

The sources consulted for the main body of the work, relating mainly to West African and African-American music and history, are listed at the end of the study, while those consulted for Native American, Javanese, and South Indian music are found at the end of each respective appendix.

Following the appendices is a glossary, defining terms from West African, African-American, Native American, Javanese and South Indian musical traditions used in this study.

Three short sections follow the glossary. The first relates the technical information about the drum sets played in our research -- the sizes and kinds of drums, cymbals, stands, sticks, brushes, mallets and pedals used. The second is a list of the audio-recording sessions that took place in our research, giving the number of the session and cassette tape, date, time, place, and musical type recorded in a chronological order. The third section contains audio-recording technical information, the kinds of equipment used to record our research sessions.

There are three clarifications needed regarding terminology. Unless stated otherwise, the term, African-American music generally refers to Black American music of North America, often what is referred to by some as the jazz tradition, but not necessarily excluding other parts of the tradition known as religious music, blues and funk. The term, Latin-American music also, unless specified to the contrary, refers to African-descended music of the Caribbean and surrounding areas. Finally, when used in the context of specific styles, the terms, African-American and West African may, depending upon usage, signify the personal styles of Freeman Donkor, Abraham Adzenyah or Edward Blackwell, respectively.

Some musical practices, notation methods and technical elements need to be clarified. Hand claps are a part of much West African drum music. Except for

Kpanlogo, the first dance drumming piece studied, hand claps are not recorded or notated for other pieces in this work which traditionally include them. Hand claps were omitted from our recording sessions because we usually did not have sufficient numbers of musicians to add them to the basic supporting drum, bell and rattle parts. Pieces in this study which traditionally include rhythmic hand clapping, besides Kpanlogo, are Gadzo, Hatsiatsia, Togo Atsia, Kpegisu, Sikyi, Agbeko, Desro La Fe, Adzogbo, and Agbadza, as well as Highlife styles. Although dance movements, songs and the master drum form a major part of West African drum orchestra music, this study was limited to the basic instrumental supporting parts. For reasons given in the sections on scope and limits of this study (Chapter 1) and moral aspects (Chapter 8), dance movements, songs and master drum parts are not discussed. Freeman Donkor has related that, for our educational purposes, these aspects of the music may be omitted so as to concentrate on the support parts, with the understanding that only in a research context would this be done (personal communication, 1984).

The supporting parts played, recorded and represented in notation are usually the basic patterns without the extended variation or improvisation which is traditional for some instruments. The inclusion of this aspect would require a separate study for each piece. The supporting instrumental rhythmic patterns are notated according to specific values, which Freeman has related are important to the music (p.c. 1985). J.H. Nketia (1963B) also mentions these values, which are consistent with the way I hear West African supporting drum rhythms. Patterns are built on contrasts of duration (long-short), dynamics (loud-soft), and pitch or tone (high-low or mute open). My notations usually reflect the first and third of these. Since I have heard the same patterns played loudly and softly on different occasions, I have not included dynamic markings. Pitch or tone differences are represented in both graph and Western staff notations by a different height on the score -- high-pitched or (high sounding) mute tones are placed in spatially and hence visually higher spaces or lines, while lower-pitched or lower sounding open tones are assigned a lower space or line. In each case, the pitch and tonal differences are relative, and are not, in the case of the modified Western staff, related to the Western tempered tuning system implied by even such a non-clefed staff. Drum set high and low tones are similarly relative in their notated forms.

Stroke durations for some drum set adaptations and West African drum parts, using

Western note values and staffs, are not written with each stroke in a uniform value (eighth notes, for example) as might be theoretically expected in situations where the actual sound decay of each stroke is, for practical purposes, the same -- as with Sogo or Gankogui tones. Many rest markings have been eliminated and replaced by lengthened note values (usually a dotted note or one eighth value) for the preceeding stroke. This makes the notations much easier to read, especially for musicians, and reflects how some Africans hear the stroke timing, as contrasting long-short durations (Freeman Donkor, p.c. 1985). For example, a drum set rhythm whose bass drum and high-hat strokes are written as an eighth and two sixteenths (Kpanlogo, Example 23; Session 1, Tape 1; Side A; 24:24 - 24:56), could justifiably be notated as three sixteenth notes and a sixteenth rest. However, to follow this practice throughout the musical examples would result in a sea of eighth or sixteenth notes and rests, which would tend to lose distinction and make reading difficult. Drum set notation traditionally usurps rests for added stroke values, and this method makes reading easier. Players understand that the actual stroke decay may not be reflected in the notation.

Tempo markings are not generally given for the musical examples throughout the study, since for each style represented, I have heard variations in pace. Where tempo markings are given, they are usually in general terms, such as "fast" or "slow", on the advice on Freeman or Abraham. This does not imply that tempo is not a specified element in the styles presented here, but only that it may vary slightly on specific occasions of performance. The tempos of the styles recorded are within the limits prescribed by the West African, Native American, Javanese and South Indian traditions.

Three musical techniques should be explained. First, the drum set is played with drumsticks, unless otherwise specified. Secondly, West African drums are also played with wooden drumsticks, unless a hand technique is indicated. Thirdly, West African bells -- excluding the Frikyiwa castanet played with an iron finger ring -- may be played with different types of striking materials. The Gankogui iron double bell may be played with a wooden stick or iron rod, although in the recordings for this study, it is played with a wooden drumstick. The Kete Dawuro, a boat-shaped iron bell, is played with a thin metal rod, while the Akom Dawuro, a longer, hollow, flat iron bell, is played with a wooden stick in the recorded performances of this study.

References are made throughout this work to specific sessions, examples and tapes

produced in our research. These are numbered for convenience in locating materials relevant to discussion, and are in an arabic number form. Specific points in the audio tapes are given as a time counter number, based on thirty minute sides (which I found often extend to thirty-two minutes). This is a precise way of showing the time of a recorded example and was suggested to me by Robert Lancefield of Reel Sound. For example, a reading of 15:00 would indicate the halfway point of a thirty minute tape. Mr. Lancefield's recording equipment included this time counting device, and it was used throughout the study. Slight variations in exact time counter points on the audio tapes may arise from duplication processes. An index is provided near the end of the study to show an approximate relation between real time and numerical counter numbers.

Guide to Pronunciation of Ewe and Akan Letters used in this Study

Vowels:

ɛ	short "e" as in "den". (Akan)
ɔ or ɒ	"or" or "aw" as in "raw". (Ewe)

Consonants:

dz	"j" as in "Jim". (Ewe)
f or f̣	an "f" pronounced with two lips; like blowing out a match. (Ewe)
gb	"g" and "b" sounds combined into one sound, as an ellision of goodbye to g'bye. (Ewe)
gy	"j" as in "jaw". (Akan)
kp	"k" and "p" sounds combined, as in k'p. (Ewe)
ky	"ch" as in "choose". (Akan)
ŋ or ɲ	a nasalized "ng". (Ewe)
ts	"ts" as in "fits". (Ewe and Akan)
ʋ or ɹ or w	a "v" pronounced with two lips. (Ewe)
x	German "ch" as in "nacht". Scottish "ch" as in "loch". (Ewe)

Index of Notation Symbols and Abbreviations for Drum Set

Abbreviations:

RC	Ride cymbal
SD	Snare drum
MT	Mounted tom-tom
FT	Floor tom-tom
HH	High-hat
BD	Bass drum
CB	Cow bell

Symbols:



Ride cymbal on upper staff; high-hat with foot on lower staff. If indicated on upper staff, side of floor tom-tom shell or snare drum rim.



Snare drum, mounted tom-tom, or floor tom-tom on upper staff; bass drum on lower staff.



On upper staff only, a snare drum rim click (stick bead or tip on drumhead, shaft striking rim).



Closed high-hat, mute drum stroke, mute cymbal bell stroke.



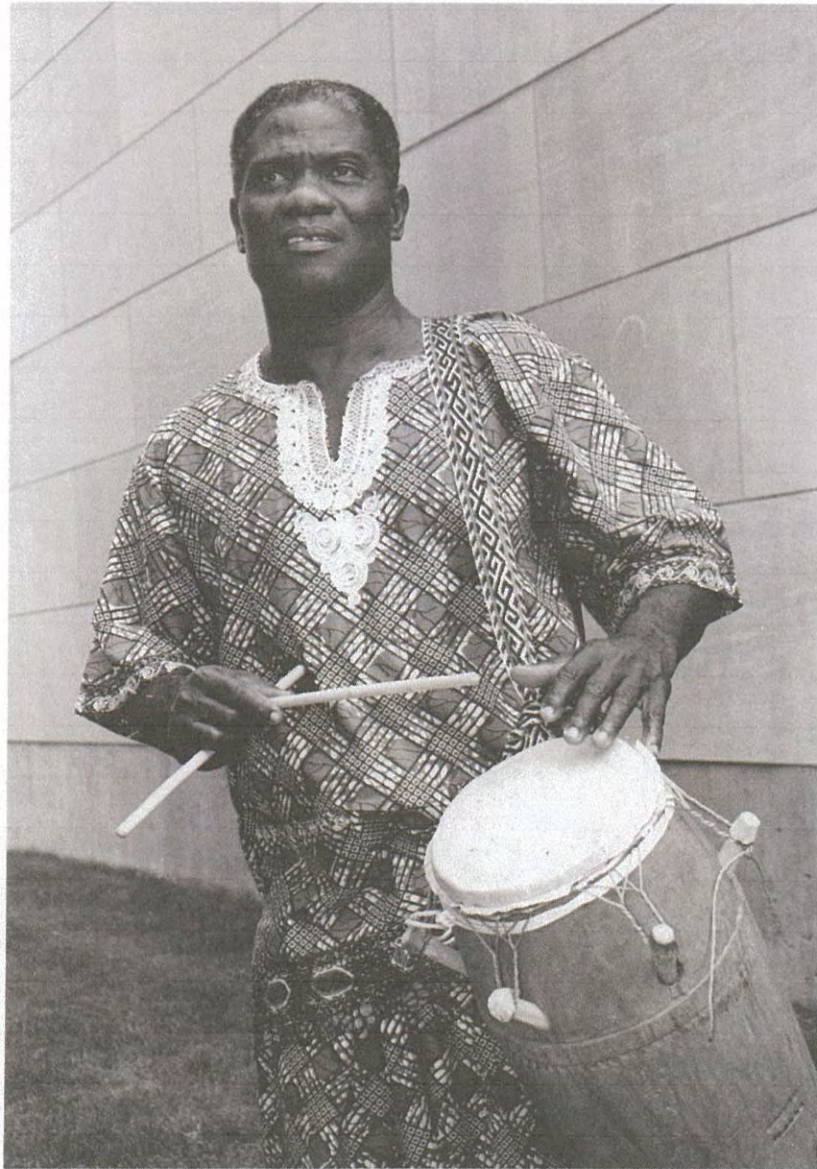
Open high-hat.

PROLOGUE

Performing with Freeman Kwadzo Donkor in the *Talking Drums* ensemble at Wesleyan University



Abraham Kobena Adzenyah



Eve dancing and drumming near Aflao, Volta Region, Ghana



Studying Atsimereu lead drumming with Emmanuel K. Agbeli (seated at sogo) at the Dagbe Cultural Center, Kopeyia-Aflao village, Volta Region, Ghana



Playing with the drummers at the Dagbe Cultural Centre



Learning Ewe dance with Mary Agamah at the Arts Centre in Accra



With Professor J. H. Kwabena Nketia (right) and an associate at the Institute for African Studies, University of Ghana-Legon



Playing drum set with the Ga *Otufo* drummers at the Arts Centre in Accra



Adapting *Gadzo* dance drum rhythms of the Ewe people to the drum set with the *Sankofa* ensemble led by Godwin Kwasi Agbeli



Traveling to play at a funeral with the dancers, singers, and drummers of Kopeyia-Aflao village, Volta Region, Ghana



Playing *Kpegisu* music at a funeral in Aflao with the Kopeyia Dagbe ensemble



With legendary African jazz drummer Kofi Ghanaba at Medie village, Ghana



Coming home: playing jazz drum set with the people in Ghana



Our *blood drum spirit* ensemble with pianist Art Hirahara, bassist Wes Brown, and saxophonist David Bindman



