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Marshall University Department of Music Presents the Marshall University African Drumming & Dance Ensemble

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DEPARTMENT of MUSIC

presents

Marshall University
AFRICAN DRUMMING &
DANCE ENSEMBLE

Steven Hall, conductor
Betsy Jordan, assistant conductor

Tuesday, April 24, 2012
Smith Recital Hall
3:30 p.m.

Program

Bamaya

traditional
Ghana, West Africa

Gota

traditional
Ghana & Benin, West Africa

Kassa

traditional
Guinea, West Africa

Tokoe

traditional
Guinea, West Africa

This program is presented by the College of Fine Arts through the Department of Music, with the support of student activity funds. For more information about this or other music events, please call (304) 696-3117, or view our website at www.marshall.edu/cofa/music.

♪♪ Program Notes ♪♪

Traditional African music is a community activity and is functional.

Traditional African music maintains deep connections with the aspects of the daily lives of the people including the history of their ancestors. Most traditional African music has four aspects: drumming, dancing, singing, and costumes

Bamaya

Bamaya, meaning, “The river valley is wet”, is the most popular social music and dance performed among the Dagbombas of Northern Ghana. Originally used for religious performances and performed only by men, Bamaya is now performed by both genders for funerals, festivals and other social occasions.

Two different but similar origination stories seemingly explain the creation of Bamaya.

During a drought and famine in the 19th century, sacrifices made by rainmakers to their land god Tingban(a) were futile. The Dagbomba men decided that prayers by women to Tingban got a faster response so they dressed in women’s clothing and went with the head priest to a grove where they believed the god resided. Due to their vigorous dance, the god was touched by the plight of the “women” and sent down an abundant rainfall. The name, Bamaya, was given to the dance as a form of gratitude and joy on the behalf of the dancers who brought the plentiful rains

Bamaya, a Dogbane harvest dance usually performed by men in ladies’ skirts, involves wiggling of the pelvis. This special dance is based on the story of a man who maltreated his wife, resulting in a plague of famine for the whole territory. It was revealed that in order to humble the man in question to his wife, all the men in the village had to dress like women - hence the Bamaya costume. The gender equality element furnishes us with food for thought...be nice to all living things. Some schools of traditional thought links the dance movements of Bamaya to fanning off mosquitoes.

Gota

This social dance for youth in the Volta Region of Ghana is a community dance among the Ewes. Usually a duet for the opposite sex, the dancers use the non-verbal language of dance through flexible torso and pelvic movements. This movement flow is interjected with a sharp silence freeze. This pause is unique in its own right because that total silence is part of the Gota music and dance. The master drummer commands the entire dance piece. The music is polyrhythmic, interwoven in a fabric of sound created by many distinct and contrasting phrases played simultaneously. The basic rhythm of each instrument is carefully crafted to contribute to the power of the overall rhythm. As the parts repeat, the players reach their aesthetic goal: a beautifully integrated whole with subliminal nurturing undercurrents to elevate the mind and soul.

Kassa

From the Maninka ethnic group, Kassa is performed in the Guinea regions of Macenta and Balandougou to celebrate baptisms and weddings. Kassa is also played while workers harvest the fields. The workers may have to walk miles from field to field and Kassa is sometimes played while the workers walk to the next field. It is also played to celebrate the bountiful harvest at a festival called the “Kassaladon”.

Tokoe

GaDangme Puberty Dance-Drumming

Entering puberty is a critical period of the ongoing communal assimilation of a child into the cultural tradition of society. The young child has developed the capability of reproducing sexually and must know the social responsibilities of that biological maturity. Puberty rites known, as “*dipo*” are the communal forum in which the *GaDangme* female acquires the knowledge of the social responsibilities of this critical biological transition. Very respected female members of the community are the officiating elders. Their wisdom, life experience, self-esteem and self-confidence provide good role models for the young adults.

Tokoe is the dance-drumming performed at the beginning of the ceremonies to introduce the very carefully selected candidates of "*dipo*" to the community. Entering "*dipo*" is an honor and privilege and all entering must meet very strict qualification measures. Among these qualification measures is the requirement that the young adult remains a virgin by the time of entering. The *GaDangme* people reside in southern Ghana along the banks of the Volta River

African Ensemble Personnel

Aaron Bailey	Alex Constantino	Jerrod Justice
Courtney Bell	Ariel Gray	Greg Kiser
Mason Beuhring	Hannah Hager	Ashley Kielmar
Matt Button	Emily Hall	Heath Lafferty
Laura Campbell	Jonathon Harrison	Drew Osenbach
Shaina Carter	Corynn Hawkins	Megan Samples
Kalyndee Cazad	Olivia Hughes	
Kayla Chappelle	Betsy Jordan *	

*-graduate student

I owe a great deal of gratitude to Ms. Betsy Jordan for her assistance in working with the dancers.

----Steve Hall



The Marshall University Department of Music is grateful for the support of many families and individuals who help make our department strong and vibrant.

If you would like to support the Department of Music through a donation and assist with student scholarships, academic travel for students and ensembles, or general support of the department please contact:

Melanie Griffis, Director of Development

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