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Marshall University Music Department Presents the Marshall University African Drumming & Dance Ensemble, Steven Hall, conductor

Steven Hall
Marshall University, hallj@marshall.edu

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**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.

**Sikyi**

*Sikyi*, social music and dance of the Akan people in Ghana, is a dance of flirtation between the sexes.

**Bantaba**

*Bantaba* is a festival music and dance of the Djolla, Ballanta and Mandingo people of Senegal and Guinea. *Bantaba* would normally be performed at the end of harvest season and would involve everyone in the community. The purpose for this music is to give thanks to God for a bountiful harvest and to bring the community together in celebration. *Bantaba*, therefore marks the end of the harvest season.

**Bamaya**

*Bamaya*, meaning, "The river valley is wet", is the most popular social music and dance performed among the Dagbomba people 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 Dagomba 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.

**African Ensemble Personnel**

- Bartlett, Mason
- Boggs, Jeremy
- Coe, Kaitlynn
- Farrell, Morgan
- Grandstaff, Jarohn
- Hall, Emily
- Horner, Jesse
- Kiser, Charles
- Meeks, Kelli
- Patrick, Ross
- Powell, Charles**
- Rivera, Amanda
- Scarberry, Christopher
- Staley, Derek
- Stradwick, Christina
- Weisz, Jordan

**American Ensemble Personnel**

- Blankenship, Stephen
- Brown-Dolinski, Tracey
- Crowe, Joseph
- Fisher, Brooke
- Hall, Allison
- Hawkins, Corynn
- Jasper, Allyson
- McGuffin, Katelyn
- Michaelis, Arika
- Potter, Brody
- Rankin, T'Asia
- Roles, Mirissa
- Settle, Colten
- Stevens, Shane
- Walls, Brandon
- Woods, Danielle

*** - 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 School of Music and Theatre 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:

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College of Arts & Media
304-696-2834
griffism@marshall.edu