

Introduction to Hand Drumming and African Movement 2012 Foothill Church Summer Camp

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School Affiliations: Akoma Arts, San Jose, CA. , College Track, East Palo Alto, CA., Ezinwanne Children's Dance Troupe, Mexican Heritage Plaza, San Jose, CA.,

Ages: 6 – Adult

Class Duration: 1hour 3 x Daily x 5 Days

Description: The lesson, "Introduction to Hand Drumming and African Movement", introduces camperst to the basic elements of West African hand drumming and dance movements using a variety of techniques.

Goals: To introduce the students to hand drumming and movement with an emphasis on West African traditions.

Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Play a drum pattern (Hand/Eye coordination)
2. Become part of a drum ensemble. (Teambuilding)
3. "Practice" drum techniques independently.
4. Learn related vocabulary words.
5. Sing and play drums (Left and right brain coordination)
6. Move to the drum patterns

Materials: Keith will provide materials

Djembe Drum, Dunun Drums (Dunumba, Sangban, Kenkeni), Hand Percussion (Bells, Shekere)

Vocabulary:

Meter (4/4, 6/8), Djembe, Dununs, Dunumba, Sangban, Kenkeni, Polyrythm, Gonkogui (2-3 headed bell), Atoke (Dunumba bell), Mali, Lenke Wood, Kuku, Shekere, Rhythm chart, Goon, Doon GoDo, Pa, Ta. Goat skin, Calf skin,

Procedures: Review and repeat the drum and movement patterns. Campers play and move to patterns as an ensemble and individually. These exercises will aid in overall body coordination and mental focus. The activities below will enhance techniques.

Camp activities: Drumming

(Day One)

Activity #1: Hand clapping in meter – Campers clap in 4/4 (Kuku pattern) tempo and create polyrythm. Ask them to recall each type of time signature and drum pattern to reinforce vocabulary. Practice the movements.

(Daily)

Activity #2: Drumming technique: Campers are shown how and where to strike the drum. The Bass, Tonic and Slap techniques are shared. Shekere (Shakers) and Bells are introduced

(Daily)

Activity #3: Djembe (Hand drumming) Campers play the Djembe to the Kuku pattern in 4/4 tempo and create a polyrythm. Ask them what each type of meter is and which drum is being used to reinforce vocabulary. Involves the entire body and contributes to coordination and timing. To improve movement and technique play Djembe Karaoke and share at-home practice techniques.

(Day Three - Five)

Activity #4: Dunun (Played with sticks) Campers play the Djembe to the Kuku pattern in 4/4 tempo and create a polyrythm. Ask them what each type of meter is and which drum is being used to reinforce vocabulary. Involves the entire body and contributes to coordination and timing. To improve movement and technique play Djembe Karaoke.

(Day Three - Five)

Activity #5: Vocalization In African (Manian) dialect singing along with the drumming. Students will learn (phonetically) West African songs in their native dialect(s).

Identification of the region of Africa, Ethnic group, dialect and the English translation.

Region: Forest Guinea and Ivory Coast

Ethnic Group/Dialect: Manian

Song: Kuku

Call: Kuku ee, ni kara bora Chorus: Ee

Call Kuku ee, ni kara bora Chorus: Ni bara fon todi ee

English Translation:

If the moon appears, I will play the drum for my friend

Campers will perform this chart for the class.

Rhythm: KuKu					
Hand	R	L	R	L	
Beat 4/4	1	2	3	4	
Hand Position					
Djembe	1	Tonic	Bass	Tonic	Tonic
Djembe	2	Bass	Tonic	Tonic	Tonic
Djembe	3	Bass	Bass	TT	TT
Dunumba		XX		XX	
Sangban			X		X
Kenkeni		XX	X	XX	X
Atoke		XX	XX	XX	XX
Shekere		X	X	XX	

Drum Assessment:

There is a "no fail" review of the drumming techniques during each class. A daily review of the song will reinforce techniques and add confidence. We ask students to share their understanding, by playing and describing the technique(s) used in the songs, which will relay their understanding and progress of the lesson plan.

Movement Class: Proper warm up and cool down techniques will be shared and ensured daily. West African movement techniques will be shared in correlation to the drum pattern.

History/Origin Of The Djembe

The exact beginning of the djembe history and tradition is unclear, but it was certainly present in the 13th century, when the great Mali Empire was formed. Apparently, it has its origins with the Malinke (also called Maninka, Mandinka, Mande) and Susu people, who roughly occupied the area between today's Bamako (Mali) and Kankan (Guinea). The "numu" are a social class of professional blacksmiths and are believed to be the first carvers of this wooden instrument. There is also a story in circulation about the "true inventor" of the djembe: A woman. While pounding millet, she broke through the bottom of her old mortar and mounted a goat skin on it. The goblet-shape of the djembe still reminds of the mortars used by African women.

Djembe Origin & Migration Map

In traditional Africa, often only certain classes of people are allowed to play certain instruments. For instance, the kora, ngoni and bala are reserved to the "jeli", the class of professional musicians (called griots in French). With the djembe, there do not seem to be such restrictions of who may play it. In fact, most famous djembe players come from numu and even noble lineages of the Mande society, who are normally not associated with making music. Through migration of the numu, the djembe is now not only present in Mali and Guinea, but also in the Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Senegal and most recently Ghana.

Cultural Context

Djembe history and drumming in its original environment, the African village, has a purpose. The various rhythms are only played at a certain time with a certain goal. For instance, djembe drumming can accompany the passage into adulthood or marriage. It's also played to honor specific groups of people or professions. This happens not through a performance in front of an audience, but through the participation of the whole village: While the same rhythm can be played for hours, playful and spontaneous interactions take place: Dancers challenge the drummers to mark their moves, while these may turn up the heat or slow down to allow the participants to sing and catch their breath.

The Djembe in Western Culture: Drum Circle

Through the ballets and African teachers, the djembe has definitely settled in Western culture. The therapeutic effect of music is being rediscovered in modern societies and drum circles pop up in every major city. Djembe drumming has become a tool for team building, therapies, self- improvement and New Age movements in the West.

The Rhythm Notation: A Basic Guide

Instrument terms:

Djembe (or jembe) -- Standard West African bell-shaped hand drum

Junjun (or dunun, dundun) -- Large double-headed drum played with sticks, often with attached bell. Or, the largest (Dunumba) of the family of double-headed drums.

Sangban (or songba) -- Medium-sized double-headed drum

Kenkeni -- Smallest double-headed drum. Like the Junjun, the songba and Kenkeni can have attached bells.

Basic notation for djembe:

The traditional Yoruba "oral notation" terminology as taught by Babatunde Olatunji. It mimics the standard range of sounds produced by the West African djembe.

G: Gun ("Goon") = bass beat with lead/strong hand

D: Dun ("Doon") = bass beat with other hand

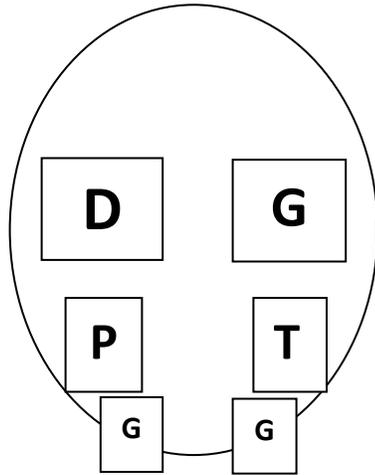
g: go = rim beat with lead/strong hand: tip half of fingers

d: do ("doe") = rim beat with other hand

P: Pa = slap beat with lead/strong hand: sharp glancing stroke with fingers

T: Ta = slap beat with other hand

Map of Notes on Drum Head:



Additional tips on using the notation:

Use or visualize the above map when reading the rhythms in this book. Since different people learn best in different ways, here are some other ideas for learning the notation.

Sing the rhythms. As you read G - D - g d g d, say silently or aloud, *Goon, Doon, Pa Ta, Godo Godo*.

Repeat slowly (with visual and voiced cues) until your hands remember a rhythm.

Don't worry too much about Left vs. Right at first. When learning a rhythm, if the left and right handing seems too complicated, focus on the basic three sounds, with whichever hands you like: bass (**G/D**), slap (**P/T**), and rim-tone (**g/d**). As your speed increases it will become more important to find a fluid left-right balance for each rhythm.

Spiritual Significance of the Djembe

When built according to traditional standards, every element of the djembe is rife with spiritual significance. Each piece of the drum holds the spirit of its maker; the wood of the body, the skin of the drum head and the workmanship of the artist who made the drum. By using all three spirits in harmony, the spirits join together to make beautiful, and powerful music. The drummer is able to connect with him or herself, to those around, and to nature.

The first of the spirits is from the body's wood. The artist must make an offering to the spirit of the tree before cutting it down to hollow it out. Legend states that the spirit of the tree is a djinn, which is the male, malevolent version of a Genie. Djembes were traditionally carved from hollowed out Dimba trees." The djinn gave the djembe as a gift to the Malinke people, and many believe that the wood is imbued with the power to make the African people dance.



The second spirit of the djembe is found in the drum head. Goatskin is the preferred animal hide used for djembe drum heads, but artists also use skin from antelopes, deer, camels, zebras and calves. Drum heads are made from the female's hide. Malinke mythology describes the first djembe's drum head as coming from the hybrid of a zebra and a giraffe a "gebraffe." The drum head allowed the Malinke people to communicate over long distances. Therefore, the djembe was an integral element in tribal language, connecting members in other areas.

The instrument maker also lends his or her spirit to the drum. The creation of the djembe was difficult, and was undertaken only by members of the blacksmith caste. In particular, attaching the hide to the wood is difficult, because that attachment is one of the crucial elements in the creation of sound. The artist must take care in the tanning of the hide, because of the reflection of

the spirit as well as the resonance of the drum, and in the choosing of the wood, as the wood had to be able to burn all night in a fire. The time and effort used during the artistry of the djembe contributed the spirit of the artist to the djembe.

In Mali, djembes have been used in sacred rituals for more than a millennium. Djembefolas, or djembe players, lead the music for marriages, births and funerals, as well as for a number of seasonal ceremonies. Furthermore, medicine men used the djembe to calm their patients, believing that the djembe could heal the spirit.