



College of Music

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

West African Highlife Ensemble

Maputo Mensah, director

7:30 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 4, 2017
Grusin Music Hall
Imig Music Building

Be engaged. Be inspired. Be here.

Be Boulder.

Program

Kpatsa

Traditional Dance

Kpatsa is a dance of the Ga-Adangme people in Southern Ghana. Mythology says that Ga-Adangme hunters first learned it from the dwarfs. In modern society, it is performed at many different types of gatherings, including those of political leaders, visits by important figures and holiday celebrations.

Amoulanga

Magic System

Amoulanga is an uplifting Highlife song from the Ivory Coast. The lyrics sing of the virtues of upholding tradition.

Love Dance

Paa Kow

Agba Yei

arr. Selasee Atiase

Agba Yei means burden or heavy load, and the idea come from a public domain song from Ghana, which was adapted into this danceable arrangement by Selasee Atiase in 2004. In Ghana and many African countries, people bear heavy loads—food, firewood, water, farm produce, etc.—on their heads as means of hauling things from point A to B, especially in the marketplace. This song is the voice of one such person who has been carrying heavy loads all day and is done for the day, ready to take a break, and is asking someone to help take this heavy load off so they can sit, catch a breath and get a drink after a hard day's work. Time for happy hour after a hard day's work!

Dreams Come True

Paa Kow

I remember when I was young,
All the wonderful dreams.
And now I realize
My dreams are coming true.

Dreams come true,
Dreams come true,
Dreams come true.
Agya, Dreams come true.

Maami Water

arr. Selasee Atiase

Maami Water means mermaid. This song is a public domain song from the late 1800s when slave trade was abolished and the guitar found its way into African communities from those freed slaves who returned to Africa. It was adapted and recorded by Selasee Atiase in 2005. Finger-picking styles from African instruments like the seprewa from Ghana, West Africa, were adapted onto the guitar and became known as “palm wine music” which later developed into the Highlife genre. The song *Maami Water* talks about random unrelated scenarios: a child who is upset with their parent; being careful when walking in the streets of Accra (Ghana's capital city) so as not to be distracted by the sight of beautiful women and be run down by cars. Then it warns while on board the ships returning the free former slaves, not to mention names or else the mermaid will take away the person whose name has been mentioned. The text refrains are mostly vocables.

Akpeteshie

Dela Yaw Botri

This song is a good example of pure Highlife style. You can hear the upbeat bell pattern drive the ensemble. The lyrics are a sort of public service announcement: “Drinking and driving is not good. If you are drinking, don't drive, because safety is important.” This song provides an excellent opportunity to get up and dance!

Highlife and the CU Boulder West African Highlife Ensemble

Highlife is a form of popular music from West Africa, widely heard especially in Ghana and Nigeria. The development of highlife is the result of interactions with European culture, urbanization, and the formation of new social identities. Hence, highlife draws first from the indigenous dance music and topical song forms among the various ethnic groups in the countries (including the Akan, Ewe, Igbo, and Yoruba peoples); late 19th century sounds of the British Regimental Band music on the West African coasts; 20th century palm wine guitar music. For urbanized Africans who may be working far away from home, highlife continues from where traditional music left off. Highlife is performed in the cafes, nightclubs, ballrooms, concert halls, and the other venues of entertainment.

The CU West African Highlife Ensemble was formed in the fall of 2000 when Kwasi Ampene joined the College of Music Faculty. It is the only student Highlife ensemble in the United States, functioning as a key component of the College of Music's venture into the intriguing world of ethnomusicology. The Highlife Ensemble offers a unique opportunity, not only to explore, but to create music entirely new to American students. Our repertoire goes beyond Highlife to include traditional, neo-traditional, and Afro-Pop genres of countries from West Africa to South Africa.

Personnel

CU West African Highlife Ensemble

Maputo Mensah, director

Paa Kow, assistant director

Zane Cupec, teaching assistant

Ben Kammin, teaching assistant

Students

Selasee Atiase, Ben Cefkin, Nicholas Holland, Xia Duffing Romero, Christine Sears, Kyle Lezzi, Emma Mondry, Avery Johnson, Jonathan Colegrove, Sam Morgan, Zak Kopeikin, Mitchell Levy, Trevor Jargon, Charlotte Bellerjeau, Mathias Skreden

Biographies

Maputo Mensah, director, has over 20 years of experience performing traditional Ghanaian dance and drumming. Growing up in a family of drummers and dancers, he began performing in a family group at the age of 5. His first professional performance was at the age of 10 with the West African Folkloric Troupe. Maputo has studied with the renowned Mustapha Tettey Addy for 14 years, and has performed solo in his own Logo Ligi troupe and as a guest drummer and dancer internationally. Maputo combines a love of Ghanaian culture with a passion for sharing joy with people around the world. Maputo takes students to Ghana every year to study drumming and dance. For more information, visit maputomensah.com.

Gamelan Ensemble

4:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 5

Grusin Music Hall

CU's Gamelan Ensemble, featuring the sacred Gamelan Genta Kencana (Holy Golden Sound), performs this unique type of music and dance that originates from the Indonesian islands of Java and Bali.



CU PERFORMING ARTS
music

Upcoming Events at the College of Music

Collegiate Chorale, Men's Chorus and Women's Chorus

7:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 5

Grusin Music Hall

Concert Jazz Ensemble and Jazz Ensemble II

7:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 9

Grusin Music Hall

Vocal Jazz and Madrigal Singers

7:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 6

First Presbyterian Church

Early Music Ensemble

7:30 p.m., Friday, Nov. 10

Grusin Music Hall

Thompson Jazz Combos

7:30 p.m., Monday, Nov. 6

Old Main Chapel

Ekstrand Competition Final

2:00 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 12

Grusin Music Hall

Percussion Ensemble

7:30 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 8

Grusin Music Hall

University Choir and University Singers

7:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 12

Grusin Music Hall

Learn more at colorado.edu/music

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