

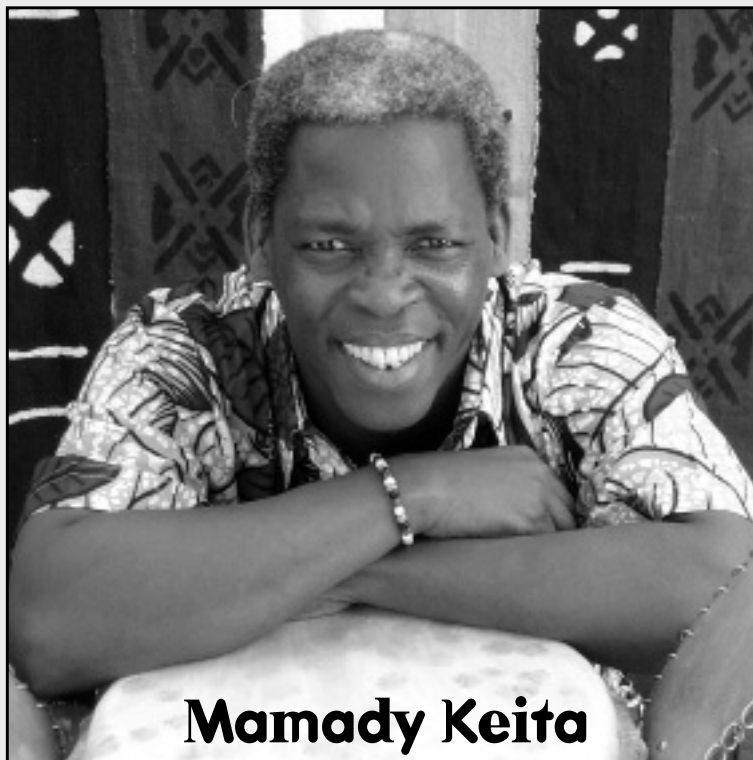
A Free Publication
Volume IX, Issue 1
Fall/Winter 2007-2008

WORLD & PERCUSSION RHYTHM

On the pulse of the Global Drum Community



Guinean Market Place



Mamady Keita



Remembering Max Roach

Inside

- Interviews: Mamady Keita, Taylor, Erica Azim, Joe Gonzalez Part II
- Jazz Vibes by Bob Wessberg
- Photo Essays: Chicago Rhythm Scene, KoSA XII, New York City, Guinea- West Africa
- Beat Gallery, CD reviews and much more!

*WPR is celebrating
10 years!*



Look inside to see if you've won one of 130 special prizes!

Check us out online!

**www.RhythmCommunity.com/WPRmagazine
umarain.com**

Mission Statement

We believe the process of drumming is healing and life enhancing. Our mission is to serve as a venue for the support of the world percussion community and to provide a publication that addresses the ideas, concerns, news and information that is of interest to this community. ▼

Staff

Published by

Terry Reimer, DBA *World Percussion and Rhythm*

Publisher, Editor & Creator

Terry Reimer

Art Director/Production Manager

Kathleen Hardy

Distribution Assistant

Aimee Bass

Cover Photos

Guinean Marketplace by Taylor
Mamady Keita and Max Roach courtesy of the artists

Contributors

Pedro Barriera, Brad Boynton, Leobadis "Piquin"
Gonzalez, Issac H. Gutwilik, Aldo Mazza, Terry
Reimer, John Santos, Peter Schaupp, Bill Scheidt,
Anthony J. Stagg, Taylor, Bob Wessberg

World Percussion and Rhythm magazine is published bi-annually by Terry Reimer, DBA World Percussion and Rhythm. Opinions expressed by any of its authors do not necessarily reflect positions of World Percussion and Rhythm or the Publisher. Copyright 2007-2008. All rights reserved. The respective authors and creators copyright the content of this magazine. Law prohibits reproduction of any part of this publication without written consent of the Publisher.

Correspondence and submissions:

Terry Reimer,
1020 Wellington, #1F, Chicago, IL 60657
Evening (773) 348-0966
Email: wprmagazine@aol.com

Advertising: (773) 348-0966

Call for our LOW RATES!
Classified Ads: \$20.00 up to 25 words
Discount web ads available
for print advertisers!
Tell 'em you saw their ad in WPR!

WORLD & PERCUSSION & RHYTHM

On the pulse of the Global Drum Community

Contents

In Memory of Max Roach	4
Interview: Mamdy Kieta	5
Interview: Taylor	7
Africa (photo essay)	9
Heineken Jazz Fest (photo essay)	10
PR Drummer's Summer (photo essay)	10
New York City 2007 (photo essay)	11
Interview: Joe Gonzalez Part II	13
Interview: Erica Azim	15
Bob Wessberg —Jazz Vibes	17
Chicago Rhythm Scene (photo essay)	19
Beat Gallery	21
Rhythms of Brazil	22
KoSA XII (photo essay)	23
CD/Video/Book Reviews	25
QuestFest 2007	28
Of Note/Repercussions	28



Art by Charlie Rosario

Editor's Welcome

World Percussion and Rhythm magazine brings you the best of the vibrant and richly varied global drum scene. It's the only magazine of its kind. "WPR's coverage is authoritative, to the point and is of the authentic rhythms, questions, instruments and issues." WPR gets into the hands of drummers, percussionists and champions of rhythm in more than 30 states from New York to California, from Florida to Wisconsin and from more than 19 countries from France, Canada, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brasil, Africa, and beyond. WPR continues to attract dynamic contributors and top quality advertisers representing the global drum community. Become part of the WPR Team! *World Percussion and Rhythm* magazine is accepting submissions for articles in all areas. We also accept submissions of artwork, photography and poetry related to percussion. Call (773) 348-0966.



Photo by Clair Lewis

Congratulations! *World Percussion and Rhythm* magazine is 10 years old! When I decided to expand the Women's Spirit Drummers' monthly newsletter after eight years, WPR was born! I enrolled the help of friends in the Primal Connection. Since that time, so many drum experts and enthusiasts have contributed so much and shared so deeply, the wisdom of the drum. From Babatunde Olatunji (7/97), Giovanni Hidalgo, Zakir Hussain and Santana, we've covered so much rhythm! Welcome our latest, greatest Art Director/Production Manager, Kathleen Hardy! Look inside your issue to see if you've won a prize! WPR will give away 10 FREE BUSINESS CARD AD SPACES (\$550 value)! 10 FREE 2-YEAR SUBSCRIPTIONS! 10 DRUM TOY GIFTS! 100 WPR DRUM BAG/BUMPER STICKERS to lucky random winners!

—Terry Reimer, WPR Editor/Publisher



In Memory of Max Roach

Compiled by Terry Reimer



The legendary jazz drummer Max Roach was born on January 10th, 1924 in Newland, North Carolina. He moved to the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, NY at the age of four. He died from complications from Alzheimer's disease on Thursday morning, August 16th, 2007 at 12:45 am, in New York at the age of 53. Roach is survived by his five children, Daryl Keith Roach, Maxine Roach, Raoul Roach, Ayo Roach and Dara Roach. The family issued the following statement: "We are deeply saddened by our beloved father's passing. We wish to convey our sincere thanks and appreciation for all the blessings and condolences we have received at this time. As his family we are fortunate to have been part of his life and we will continue to share his legacy as a musician, educator and social activist with the world." In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be sent to the Alzheimer's Association, 225 N. Michigan Ave., Floor 17, Chicago, IL 60601-7633. www.alz.org. Or Veritas Therapeutic Community, Inc. Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10025. (212)865-9182, ext. 205. <http://www.veritas-inc.org>. Max Roach was a Veritas Foundation trustee and founder.

Max Roach was remembered at Riverside Church on 490 Riverside Drive/91 Claremont Ave., Manhattan, NY on Friday, August 24th with a public viewing and funeral service.

Artists paying tribute included Lieutenant Governor David A. Paterson, Bill Cosby, Maya Angelou, Sonia Sanchez, Amiri Baraka, Cassandra Wilson, Randy Weston, Elvira Green, Stanley Couch, Billy Taylor and Jimmy Heath, Roach's band mates Cecil Bridgewater, Reggie Workman and Billy Harper, Gary Bartz, Odean Pope, the Reverend Dr. Calvin O. Butts, III, Pastor of Abyssinian Baptist Church and the Reverend Dr. James Alexander Forbes, Jr., Senior Minister Emeritus of the Riverside Church, who presided. Sonny Rollins, Candido Camero and Bobby Sanabria were just a few of the attendees at the service. So many people showed up that they filled the church to capacity and hundreds were turned away at the door, only to wait outside, pay their respects with their presence and honor Roach on this day. Jazz flowed inside the church and drummers from Drummer's Grove in Brooklyn showed up to honor him with drumming after the service outside.

Max Roach was daring, innovative and legendary. He had lightning fast hands and could simultaneously maintain several rhythms. He dislocated beats, layered beats and varied the meter, pushing jazz beyond the boundaries of 4/4 time. He used cymbals for melodic lines, tom-toms and bass drums for accents. His approach mystified and challenged

other drummers. He was introduced to music by a piano left by previous tenants and sang with the Children's Choir at Concord Baptist Church where he found a snare drum. He was influenced by his gospel-singing mother. He was already playing drums at the age of ten and by 16 was playing with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. By eighteen he was backing pioneer saxophonist Charlie Parker. Roach went on to perform with all the jazz greats including Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Thelonius Monk, Coleman Hawkins, Bud Powell, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus and Dinah Washington among many others in a remarkable career that spanned eight decades. Recognized as "the most important drummer in jazz" or hailed as "the greatest trap drummer in the world has ever witnessed," Roach's influence goes far beyond the drum kit. He was instrumental in the creation of bebop and hard bop and was and innovative composer. He conceived of and implemented new designs in drumming and executed them flawlessly. He made seminal recordings with almost all of the innovators of the past 60 years.

Roach received a degree from the Manhattan School of Music and was a professor at the University of Massachusetts for 25 years. He also received Honorary Doctorates from Yale, Columbia, Medgar Evers, Berklee, Manhattan School of Music, Pennsylvania and Bologna, Italy Universities. He was an Honorary Member of the Academy of Arts and Letters, a recipient of the NEA Masters Award, named Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters in France (the country's highest cultural honor), a member of the Grammy Hall of Fame, the International Percussive Arts Society Hall of Fame and a member of the Jazz at Lincoln Center's Neshui Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame. In the early 1950's Roach and bassist-composer Charles Mingus founded Debut Records. As a teacher, Roach would always pass his music along. Before he'd play, he would write a full transcription of his music and pass it out to his students so they would only hear him play once but could re-create it. In the late 50's his band mates, trumpet player Clifford Brown and pianist Bud Powell, were killed in a car accident and Roach was plunged into depression. But he rebounded in the 60's with a new political consciousness. He was one of the first jazz musicians to take on the issue of racism and investigate his African roots during Black Nationalism that entered jazz in the 60's. But there was always a fundamental belief in the American-ness of his music, jazz and the nature of improvisation that had developed in America. He is quoted as saying, "I am an American and the drum set is one of the few instruments native to this country. This is a democratic nation and jazz is a democratic music in which we all express ourselves as individuals and cooperate for the overall good. That's good enough for the bandstand and it is good enough for the world. In music you can make a dream come to life as a reality of design and feeling. Democracy is a dream of being able to do it better some day. I have never stopped dreaming."

Roach also broadened his career to compose, collaborate with choreographers, filmmakers and playwrights, traveling to Ghana in search of new music and performing with groups in Japan and Cuba. He produced a tribute to Miles Davis, played in the So What Brass Quintet, did *To the Max*, featuring poetry and dance of the 19th Century Plains Indians, performed as a soloist with the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, and founded the Uptown String Quartet with his daughter, Maxine. In the 0's he gathered an all-star percussion orchestra of drummers and composers called M'Boom, and ensemble that approached unprecedented tonal and coloristic varieties. The group recorded four albums and collaborated with other percussion ensembles such as the Kodo Drummers of Japan and the Tito Puente Orchestra. Max Roach was received by the President of the United States at the time, Bill Clinton. He appeared in concert with rappers, breakdancers, composed for Alvin Ailey, for off-Broadway productions and three Sam Shephard plays (for which he won an Obie Award), led a double quartet and played duets with avant-gardists like pianist Cecil Taylor and Toni Morrison.

Upon his passing, WKCR radio immediately started 155-hours of marathon Max Roach tribute programming that included almost half of Roach's recordings. Phil Schaap, godfather of the extended retrospec-

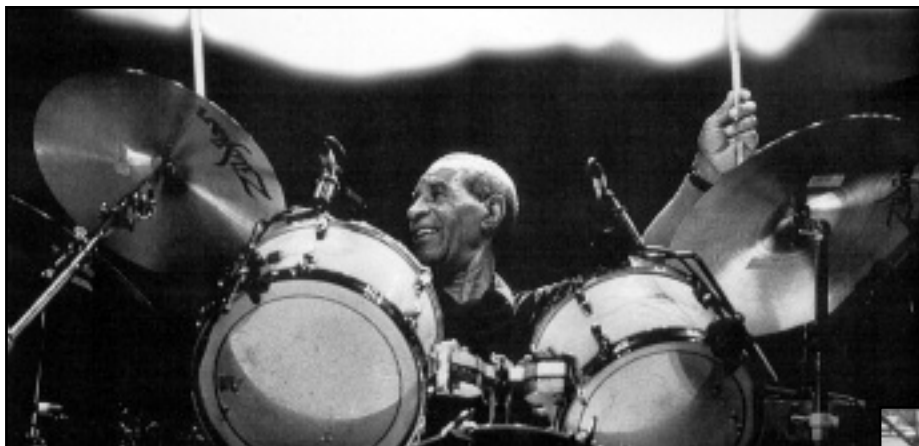


Photo by Terry Reimer

The hearse and a djembe drummer honoring Max Roach.

tives on WKCR said that in March of 1981 they played Roach's complete catalogue which took 10 days and if they did that now, it would take about two and a half weeks. WBGO radio also devoted several hours of programming to the late great Max Roach. Many other stations, institutions and individuals continue to honor this great man. His amazing creativity, groundbreaking genius, prolific works, innovative style, challenging cultural, social and political beliefs and kind and generous nature will continue to be an inspiration to us all. ▼



A Memory of Max



Photo by Terry Reimer

Some of the crowd outside Riverside Church.

Max Roach was and will always be an idol and mentor to me as he is with countless others.

One of the absolute highlights of my career was the blessed opportunity to spend a few weeks with him in a wonderful project conceived by cutting edge San Francisco pianist, Jon Jang. I believe it was in 1990.

Wayne Wallace, John Calloway, Anthony Brown and the extraordinary poets Genny Lim, Sonia Sanchez, and Victor Hernandez Cruz were all involved. We performed at the University in Lawrence, Kansas, at a sold out Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, and at Koncepts Cultural Gallery in Oakland. I know I speak for all of those great artists in stating that being around Max at rehearsals and on stage gave us a shot of adrenaline, history, and political awareness simultaneously.

His contributions to modern music are legendary and well-documented, but his humility and commitment to justice, real freedom, and utilizing his art and visibility for the common good is what bowled me over and left an indelible impression.

I have the utmost respect for that kind of social responsibility on the part of artists and attempt in my own small way, to emulate Max, Paul Robeson, Charles Mingus, Abbey Lincoln, Ruben Blades, Silvio Rodriguez, Barbara Dane, and all who put the truth in front of their careers.

I only hope that new generations of musicians will know about his heart as well as his art.

—John Santos

Mamady Keita

Interview by Terry Reimer with Michael Taylor

Translated from French by Bill Scheidt

Thanks to Taylor, for hosting this interview. Taylor is a Chicago based djembe player, educator, performer and recording artist. He founded Holy Goat Percussion, specializing in sales and repair of authentic djembes and dounduns, special events, workshops and performances. Taylor is a certified professional of the djembe and the Director of Tam Tam Mandingue, Chicago. Bill Scheidt is the Director of Tam Tam Mandingue, Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Mamady Keita was born in 1950 in the small village of Balandougou, Guinea, West Africa. He has become one of the few Master djembe players in the world. Keita was chosen out of 500 artists to work under the direction of Harry Belafonte and President Sekou Touré in the National Ballet of Guinea and then went on to become the Artistic Director of the Ballet National Djoliba. Keita has won gold medals from the International and Pan African Festivals. Keita joined Souleymane Koli's group, "Koteba" to perform next to African stars such as Touré Kunda of Senegal and Mory Kante of Guinea. He started his own group in '88 called "Sewa Kan" ("the sound of joy"). He has starred in several films, has eleven CD's and six instructional VHS/DVD's. CD's: Wassolon, Nankama, Mögöbalu, Hamanah, Afö, Balandugukan, Mamady Lee, Agiate, Sila Laka, Live @ Couleur Café and Mandeng Djara. Two biographical films: Djembefola and Mögöbalu. He also has a book, "Mamady Keita: A Life for the Djembe". (All available at www.ttmusa.org). Keita founded Tam Tam Mandingue in '91 in Brussels, Belgium ("Drums of the Mandingue"), schools for percussion, of which there are 14 branches now, in France, Germany, Japan, Israel, Guinea and the US.

WPR: How were your workshops here in Chicago? I'm sure everyone was thrilled to meet you and/or see you again.

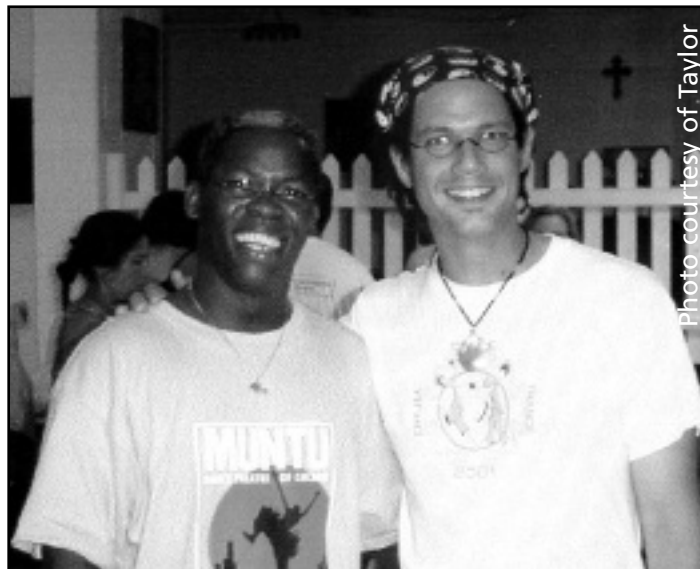
Keita: They were very, very good. I was here two years ago also.

WPR: Was your family musical?

Keita: I am from Balandugu, a village northeast of Guinea. My family never played djembe. My father was a big hunter but he never hunted lions because the lion is our symbol, the symbol for "Keita". We kill all the other animals such as antelope, etc. Others have symbols for their family names of birds and small lizards but all the other animals we hunt don't have family names.

WPR: You were called "Nankama" that means "born for it" and your name was said to travel beyond Balandugu, beyond Guinea, beyond all of Africa.

Keita: When a woman in our home is pregnant, she wants to know whether it is a boy or girl and the kind of future it will have. Here they have ultrasound. In our home she goes to a diviner, someone who can see the future. My mother went to see an old hunter. This hunter read stones and said, "your baby is a boy and this is your last child. This child is very special and will be bigger than this village, bigger than this region, bigger than our country. The world is going to know your son". My mother asked if I was going to be a president, a rich person or a warrior? How is the world going to know him? The diviner said, "he is going to amuse himself and have fun. When you bring this child into the world he will show you immediately how he is going to become bigger. But the moment he becomes big, you and his



Mamady Keita and Taylor, circa 2001

father will no longer be here. You must remember and guard this information. It is the sacrifice of your life". My mother told my father who didn't understand how I would become big just by amusing myself. My mother said they would observe everything I did. So she gave birth to me and the moment I started to crawl, everything I saw that made a sound, I played it. Everything in my playing was already strong and precise. My mother said to my father, "watch your son. He plays everything that makes a sound." My father said that was nothing and that every kid plays things that make a sound. I became stronger and stronger. One day my mother was certain I would become a djembefola so when I was one or two years old, she took me to a very old blacksmith who made me a very small djembe drum. They wanted to see if the old hunter was right. My mother told me that when she brought me the djembe drum my face was like she had given me life, the thing I had been waiting for. That night my djembe and I slept under the same blanket. I was inseparable from that djembe. That continued to seven years old. I participated in all the traditional festivals. At seven you need to have an initiation to the drum if you are intelligent about what you are doing. My father brought me to the house of my master, Karinka Djan Conde. At seven, he started my initiation into the djembe drum. My father died that year and my mother died when I finished the initiation at ten years old. The old hunter had said as much to my mother. Initiation is about the spirit of the djembe, the philosophy and respect of the djembe and protection of you as a djembefola.

WPR: Protection from what?

Keita: Inside the circle of drummers, sometimes things go on. The djembefolas know which plants are good or bad. When you meet with other djembefolas you have to protect yourself and know the signs. For example if you have a bad djembefola, they'll take a needle pass it into a tree saying the name of the drummer they don't like, and it's like they passed the needle into that person's fingers. If this happens it's impossible to play the djembe! When a festival comes you can't play. That's serious. There are a lot of things that can happen. It's a competition. Everyone wants to be the best djembefola. I was initiated into seven secrets of the djembe at 10 years old.

WPR: What are the seven secrets of the djembe?

Keita: That I will not say. That is just my business. These seven secrets are what my master gave me. The day you go to transmit these secrets to some-

one, you must have 100% complete trust in that person. You guard them for yourself.

WPR: Tell us a bit about the spirit or spirituality of your life with the djembe.

Keita: Centuries in the past when a djembefola wanted a new djembe, he took ten cola nuts to go to ask the old blacksmith of the village to make him a new djembe. If the blacksmith says OK, he goes to the forest to look at the wood. He asks the djembefola if he wants lenke wood or djala wood. When he sees a good tree he returns to the village. Then he comes again to the tree to ask and to pray to take the tree to make a djembe. The blacksmith does his ceremony then returns for the second ceremony to ask the strength and spirit of the tree to become a djembe. The tree is made first by sculpting a hole through it. When the hole goes through we say we've given a voice to the tree. They sculpt and create the shape. The day it is finished there is another ceremony because he's given a voice to the tree. After he makes the shape, he takes it to the village to have a ceremony there. He prepares the skin. That day there is another ceremony because now he's given a tongue to the tree. Then he tightens it and it is ready to play. The first day the master takes the djembe to play is a very big day. The djembe has a big, big history.

WPR: Does the djembe speak the story of the tree or the village or the people?

Keita: All of it. I can tell the history. Without the djembe I can't tell anything.

WPR: Do the shekere or bell players have a story to tell?

Keita: That's for them to tell. Everyone has their instrument in our house but the shekere and bell are not for me. I do know how to play them but I wasn't initiated to them. In our home there are people who just specifically play the shekere (called djabara).

WPR: Describe how your association with Harry Belafonte was important in forming the Ballet National Djoliba and your connection with the president of Guinea, Sekou Toure.

Keita: When I was 12 or 13 years old, there was a national festival in Guinea. Every region had someone to come to each village to see who was a good dancer, singer or drummer. They brought the best to form the ballet. When the Governor saw me play I was selected. We traveled 150 km. from my home to form the regional ballet for the competition. At that time, in '63 or '64, all the regions also went to the capital city of Conakry, 1,000 km away, for a 15-day festival. I was 13 years old. At that time our president of Guinea, Sekou Toure was good friends with Harry Belafonte. Belafonte asked the president if he would like a ballet to bring to the US. He said of course! So at the festival we will search the best of the regions and give you the artists so you can form the ballet. In '64 they recruited the best. I was recruited because when they saw my size they were surprised by the sound that came out of my djembe. Everyone in the whole capital said, "he's awesome!" They chose me and some girls for dancing and another drummer. I played all the rhythms in the performance (the "spectacle"). There were 500 artists recruited from different regions. We went to an island. We were at the disposition of Harry Belafonte's team who formed us and trained us in physical education and exercises. They were there to train us and prepare us to do the ballet, not for choreography. One day we saw the Harry Belafonte team leave the island and another Guinean team coming. We asked why the Americans [African-Americans] were leaving and who they were. I still have no idea who they were. (One day when I was in New York City doing a performance with Sewa Kan, I saw one of the women who was training us on the island!) They introduced us to our new

Director, Choreographer and Administrative person.

We continued to work for nine months. At the end they kept selecting artists down to 45. I was among the ones selected at the start when we created the Ballet National Djoliba. When we moved to Conakry we found that the president had made a stage inside his palace. That's when we started to suspect a political problem had passed between Harry Belafonte and the president. But to this day, not one artist knows what happened. I starred in my first film, "Africa Dance" with Harry Belafonte. That was in '64. I was 14 years old. After that, Ballet National Djoliba was formed and we started to travel. The Ballet was really for the president Sekou Toure. We represented him everywhere in international festivals. I won my first gold medal at the Folklore Fest in Italy in '67. I won my second gold medal in '69 at the Pan African Fest in Algeria. I was the Lead Drummer, Djembe Soloist and Artistic Director since '79. I created music repertoires and trained some of the world's top djembe players. I did 23 years in the Ballet.

WPR: You broke out of Ballet National Djoliba in '86 and moved to the Ivory Coast.

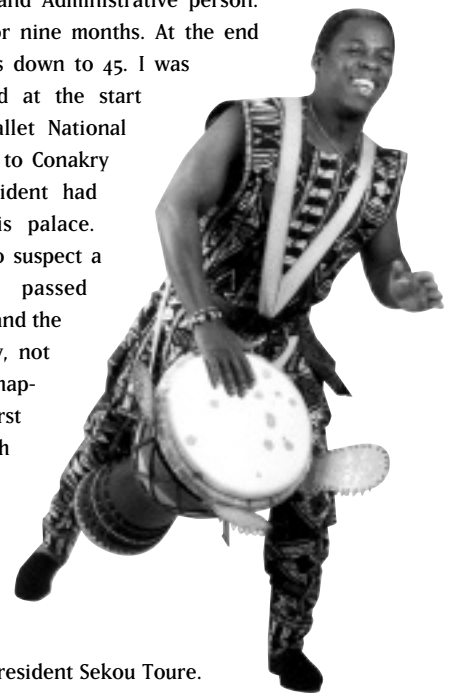
Keita: It wasn't a pleasurable experience for me any more. I wanted to work for me, to prepare for my retirement. After the Ballet, I signed my first contract with Souleymane Koli's group, "Koteba" in the Ivory Coast. [Keita performed next to African stars such as Touré Kunda of Senegal and Mory Kante of Guinea. He also starred in "La Vie Platinée" ("The Flat Life") and wrote and recorded the entire soundtrack for the film.] I did one and a half years with him and then I had a contract in Belgium. I worked there for two to three years for a non-profit group called Zig-Zag, until they stopped working. In '91 I started the first djembe school on the planet, Tam Tam Mandingue. Today there are 14 schools. What's interesting is that the word of the hunter came true. I started in the village, they took me to the region, the capital and then all over the continents. The hunter was right. That's why they call me the "Nankama". It means, "I was born for that".

WPR: You have 14 schools in different countries! Which countries are studying djembe a lot and which are just beginning?

Keita: Now all of them are interested in djembe. Now there are no countries where there is no djembe. It might be false, but perhaps Viet Nam, Peru and Saudi Arabia and the Middle East are just beginning. There is a Tam Tam Mandingue school in Israel though. It's difficult to say because the djembe is everywhere. They're starting it in Europe also.

WPR: Is it OK for people to make their own music on the djembe?

Keita: Yes, it is no problem. I play my own rhythms. Some of the rhythms



Mamady Keita continues page 24

Taylor

By Terry Reimer

Taylor hosted Mamady Keita in Chicago recently and WPR was able to speak with him about his own career as a "djembist". Taylor received his Tam Tam Mandingue teaching certificate, is a Tam Tam Mandingue Certified Instructor (the only one in the Midwest), a recording artist, producer, educator and performer. Taylor is also the only person in the world, as yet, to receive a Tam Tam Mandingue Diploma, (which enables him to certify others to be Tam Tam Mandingue Instructors and teach up to professional level workshops in the Tam Tam Mandingue curriculum). Taylor is also the Founder and Director of Holy Goat Percussion, performances, sales and repairs of djembe and dunun and Director of Tam Tam Mandingue-Chicago, doing workshops, lessons and youth outreach.

WPR: How did you discover the djembe?

Taylor: It was 1994. I worked with two composers for a play and the music had to be live percussion. We started playing on pots and pans, walls, chairs and anything we could bring. Michael McElya, one of the directors of the play, heard about the African djembe and we got two of them. I thought, Wow! "This thing is incredible!" I couldn't put the djembe down. I began going to the lakefront in Chicago to play; that's where you and I met. I didn't know anything though, but that didn't stop me from going forward full-steam ahead. In those days, I felt like the rhythms were channeling through me — I didn't know any traditional rhythms, but I played constantly. Later, I would see that much of what I was doing existed in the tradition of djembe. I didn't even know there were teachers for this instrument.

WPR: How did you begin to get serious?

Taylor: I had produced and recorded a CD of drum music with Chris Pawola. You reviewed this CD for WPR. I played on Lake Michigan and people would join us. I had seen and participated in Grateful Dead drum circles before Arthur Hull and drum circle facilitation was even in Chicago. I went to a Guitar Center workshop with Paoli Mattioli and was playing floor-toms as dunduns. Then I met Michael Markus, and hung with Paolo Mattioli and Charmaine-Renata Hubbard, who were teaching at Indiana's Midwest Drum and Dance Fest in 1994. Felix, who used to manage the drum department at the Belmont and Clark Guitar Center in Chicago (who died some time ago), saw me in Paolo's workshops and said I should do a workshop. So I was doing workshops for 100 people in Guitar Center before I even knew there were teachers of djembe. Jeff Bodony, an important associate of Moriekeba Kouyate (Kora Master and Jali) and instrument maker, was in one of my workshops and asked if I was looking for a teacher. I thought that was a great idea to get a teacher. Moriekeba was teaching kora so I called Aly M'Baye who said he taught djembe but charged \$75/hour. I also called Yaya Kabo who taught djembe but charged \$25/hour so I went with him. I was his first student in the US. The first traditional djembe rhythm I ever learned was Yankady. When I first heard the tone and slap Yaya got in clear African technique, I practically laid an egg! That was the beginning of my path on the African side of things. I would later learn that Aly M'Baye and all the other Senegalese drummers from Ballet de Silimbo learned djembe from Yaya. The Ballet de Silimbo du Senegal came here to Chicago in the early 90's to play but no producers were provided so they got pissed and defected. Some were at 6950 S. May Street in Chicago. It was "Africa House" there for a long while. YaYa eventually formed a group class at Malcolm X College.

WPR: Can you give us a time line of events in your career?

Taylor: I started playing in '94. In '95 I established Holy Goat Percussion and recorded and co-produced my first CD (having begun recording in '94). I met Michael Markus in August of '95 at the Midwest Drum and Dance Fest in Selma, Indiana. I met YaYa Kabo in November of '95. I started teaching at Old Town School in '97. YaYa encouraged me; I thank him so much for that



Photo by Terry Reimer

Map of Africa



Photo by Terry Reimer

Taylor with map of old Malian Empire, 1400 AD.

among other things. In '97 I made my first trip to Guinea with Michael Marcus and M'Bemba Bangoura. In '98 I went to Guinea again; also that year I performed the first major scale production of my performance art piece called The Jungle, at the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago. In 2000 I quit my day job and went into djembe 100 percent. In 2001 I went to Guinea with Mamady Keita's program; that same year I produced my 2nd CD called Silence. In 2002 I went again to Guinea with Mamady Keita. In 2003 I produced my first instructional DVD, Remembering How to Drum and I did a third CD, Silence in the Rhythmic Soup, Music for Yoga and Meditation, which you also reviewed. In 2005 I got my Certification as a Tam Tam Mandingue instructor. I'm the only one in the Midwest. There are eleven in the US and about 40 worldwide (4 TTM Schools in the US and 13 worldwide). In 2005, I also produced my second instructional DVD, Akaran Iko Iko. 2006 was a kind of blur year; I don't remember it very well. But then in June 2007 I was the first person ever to receive the Tam Tam Mandingue Diploma Degree from Mamady Keita.

WPR: What is special about that degree?

Taylor: For the Tam Tam Mandingue Teaching Certificate exam (the first degree), there are criteria that Mamady has created. There are rhythms you are tested on to demonstrate a level of proficiency that's consistent with what the Tam Tam Mandingue Certification is. It doesn't mean you can direct a school. Being the director of a TTM school has more to do with your business presence, tenure, experience, internet presence, teaching at major institutions and things like that. The Diploma is the highest degree that he created to focus more on deeper, more intricate aspects of djembe orchestra music. You have to have a Teaching Certificate, and be the director of a TTM school to even take the diploma test. Also the diploma gives you the ability to certify people for the Teaching Certificate (for them to be TTM Instructors). Mamady wants that to happen so this tradition will live on. Both tests are extremely difficult. On the diploma test especially, Mamady is very unforgiving of mistakes; he needs to know that you really know your stuff. Part of taking these tests is Mamady's perception of how ready you are, how you handle knowledge and who you are as a person. It is important to him to know you as a person and be comfortable with that, since you will be representing him, his schools and his international organization; I love that about Mamday.

WPR: Tell us about the difference between traditional and non-traditional djembe music.

Taylor: I started djembe in a non-traditional way, then I discovered the centuries old historical and cultural depth that was just fascinating. The tradition is wonderful. Nontraditional music is great too. But what we need to be careful about is how we speak about the djembe's origins and its traditional aspects. When we speak about the tradition of djembe, it behooves us to go to where that rhythm is from and talk about it in a way that preserves its oral tradition. It is not against tradition to play djembe in a non-traditional context but it's a matter of nomenclature (naming). If you have a rhythm and you don't know what it is named, where it is from or why it is played and by whom, just say so. Some folks would attach names to rhythms that were not the rhythm in any geographical, traditional or cul-

tural context. A lot of people were doing that without knowing, in the mid and early 90's. Then I'd go to the place where this rhythm is from and they don't play it like that at all. Mamady's been really directed on cleansing the world of incorrect information about the oral tradition of his culture. A lot of rhythms are just from Guinea or just from the Ivory Coast or just from Mali. They are not from Senegal, Ghana, Togo, etc. Mamady, Famoudou Konate, Fadouba Oulare (you have to go out into the bush to get to him!), are the three, oldest living initiated grand Malinke djembe Masters. The Malinke ethnic group is one of the more dominant in djembe culture. There are LOTS of ethnic groups in djembe culture though. Some are the Bambara, the Xasonke, the Malinke, the Baole, the Senefo, Guoro, Toma, Gerze, Landouma, Nalu, Baga, Mendenyi and Susu — these groups are from Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast.

WPR: *Do Senegal, Nigeria or Ghana among other countries in Africa have their own djembe culture?*

Taylor: As far as my research indicates and from my discussions with Mamady, among the countries you mention, only, the Tambacounda region in eastern Senegal has an historical link to the djembe. In regards to Senegal, they are far more connected to sabar (like Master DouDou N'Diaye Rose plays), sarouba and bugaraboo. The Bugaraboo is a cowskin drum that looks kind of like an ashiko; straight sided with usually one person playing with jingles on his wrists. The other places you mentioned, Ghana and Nigeria, don't have a djembe tradition. That's a very important point.

WPR: *My first djembe teacher was from Ghana.*

Taylor: Maybe he went somewhere else to learn djembe tradition or maybe, like so many others, he just put his own culture's rhythms on another culture's instrument — in this case the djembe. My first teacher YaYa Kabo is Senegalese has a teacher from Guinea and a teacher from Mali. So even though YaYa was from Senegal, his information was totally intact. The Mande area is where the Malian Empire used to be. It was made strong by Sunjata Keita, the great Emperor and conqueror of the 12th and 13th centuries, CE. The djembe was originally carved by the Nalu, the cast of blacksmiths in the old Malian Empire; the women had created the rhythms before the djembe was first carved, clapping them out while singing. The way I was told from Famoudou and Mamady, it was the women who asked the men to play the rhythms on djembe. It predated colonization so you can't say djembe was from this or that country. It's not even from the north of Mali. Up there it is all sand and desert. You need trees to make a djembe. In the north you have the sand/silica/ceramic doubek.

WPR: *Life seems to have begun in this area and in ancient times, people created instruments to make sounds to express themselves. How do you trace the "family tree" of instruments to djembe? Did the log drum or slit song come first? I remember the Museum of Science and Industry had a great African exhibit on this.*

Taylor: That's a good question. Mickey Hart talks about this in his book, *Drumming at the Edge of Magic*. There were idiophones (things clapping or striking against one another) and then membranophones (skin drums) came a little later. They were able to forge metal in then Malian Empire so maybe they also made bells too. But I don't know of the djembe as a precursor to other instruments. It's a very common shape with the basic physics to produce a resonant sound.

WPR: *Was it a culture shock to go to Africa? Tell us about your trips.*

Taylor: My first main impression in Dec '97 was that when I got back to America, I was humbled to see how many things we use were so unbelievably unnecessarily. I found the excess in the Western World repugnant. It made me more silent and gave me that shocking awareness of what is truly necessary and how often we confuse the words "want" and "need". The culture chock of being in Africa was a whole different thing. I would wake up when I was there and would see what I thought was a Master Drummer. Five minutes later, I'd see another. I thought everyone was a freaking Master!

Well, it certainly doesn't mean what I thought it meant in '97 in Africa. There can be some common agreement that Fadouba Oulare, Famoudou Kouyate, Adama Drame, Soungalo Coulibaly, Doudou N'Daye Rose, Noumoudy Keita, Gbanworo Keita and Mamady Keita are Masters. Outside of that, it's very subjective. It's a combination of many things that make a Master.

WPR: *Maybe inherent talent, the genius factor, the conviction of your head, heart and spirit, have something to do with it?*

Taylor: Good point. The first couple of years I was in Africa at M'Bemba Bangoura and Michael Markus' camp, I studied with Gbanworo Keita (he was with Mamady in Ballet Djoliba and after was lead soloist for Les Ballets Africains). It was very "village". He would show you what to do, then he would solo and that was the deal. It was a very different kind of learning from folks like Mamady, Famoudou and M'Bemba who broke it down a lot more. M'Bemba is special to me because he's my teacher's teacher (Michael Markus, that is) and was also hand chosen by Mamady Keita to be in the Ballet Djoliba as second in command to do all the breaks and solos, when Mamady wasn't there.

WPR: *How did your personal or spiritual growth change as you studied djembe?*

Taylor: Drumming and vibration and rhythm are things that the whole universe is made of. When the universe is out of sync, we are too. The core of everything we know and everything that has been known, the cosmos, nature, atomic structure, is cyclical and therefore rhythmic. In any culture, ritual practice is all about that. A lot of cultures practice with chanting or music or spinning fire or doing dances with different costumes or whatever; many involve the use of fetish objects. It's all ritual practice. It's all mov-

Taylor continues on page 29

ing energy around. The djembe is no different in that way. The wisdom is 1,000's of years deep. I'll just say it; it feels like I was born again when I met djembe.

WPR: *Was it terrifying, beautiful and sad at the same time to "connect"?*

Taylor: That's interesting...It was more beautiful and sad...I can see how people would feel terrified of something so different that kind of rips you out of your roots, spinning you around in this effluvium of just everything, right? A lot of the ease I felt in the beginning of traveling through it, I can credit to my ignorance. I didn't know enough to be afraid or perhaps I am just the sort to welcome being uprooted. I was fascinated by this feeling. As I progressed and became more and more familiar with the feeling of connectedness I experienced while drumming, when I saw people clearly not connected, closed off, their disconnectedness became much more clear and louder to me.

WPR: *Do you think the world as a whole is moving toward connectedness?*

Taylor: I think the world may be moving toward a necessary destruction by the human race. Maybe that would be the greatest gift to humans, to wipe ourselves out so earth can start again and perhaps be a more peaceful place. When I teach the tradition I tell people to listen and to remember. In my opinion, everyone knows how to drum but we've forgotten. My mission is to bring people together, to spread community by way of the drum. I am optimistic that, as a planet, we are moving toward greater connectedness: a greater sense of community. ▼

Africa photos

All photos by Taylor



African Ballet



Rough cut shells



Taylor- Guinea, 1998



Guinea Market Place- 1998



Mamady Compound



Guinea Children- photo by Brad Boyington



Market place- Guinea, 2005



Guinean school



Guinean children playing- 1999

Above left:
Kondin dancer- 2005

Above:
Manian dancer- 2005

Right:
Taylor, John Yost, and
Master Drummer
Gbanworo Keita (died
2001) in Conakry





Heineken JazzFest, Puerto Rico All photos by Pedro Barriera

Ignacio Berroa

James Moody

Gadwin Vargas congo solo



Richie Gajate Band

Henry Cole

Michelle Camillo

Lee Rittenaur



Deddy Romero

Charlie Sepulveda

James Moody

Charles Flores

Dafnis Prieto

Charlie Sepulveda Band



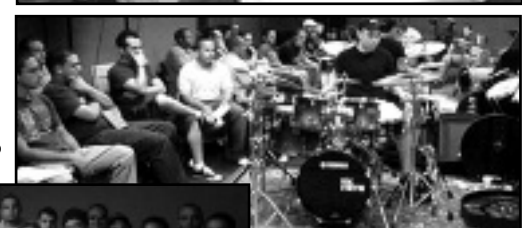
Leo Gonzalez and Charlie Rosado



All photos by
Leobadis
"Piquin"
Gonzalez



Remembering Maelo



New York 2007

All photos by Terry Reimer



Cyro Baptista (left), Anthro Fagia



Chico Hamilton- Charlie Parker Jazz Festival- Marcus Garvey Park



Blue Note



Charlie Parker Home



Bleecker Bob's Records



Capoeira Senzala



Drummer's World



Duke Ellington



Cotton Club



Drummer's Grove, Prospect Park- Brooklyn



Drum Jam, Marcus Garvey Park



Birdland



La India- Symphony Center



Jam in Thompkins Park



Jam in Washington Square Park



Keshav Music Imports



Playing the djinn
(hurdy gurdy)
Union Square



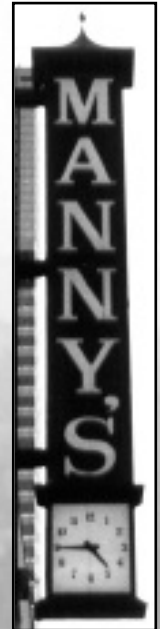
Manhattan School of Music



Village Vanguard



Smoke



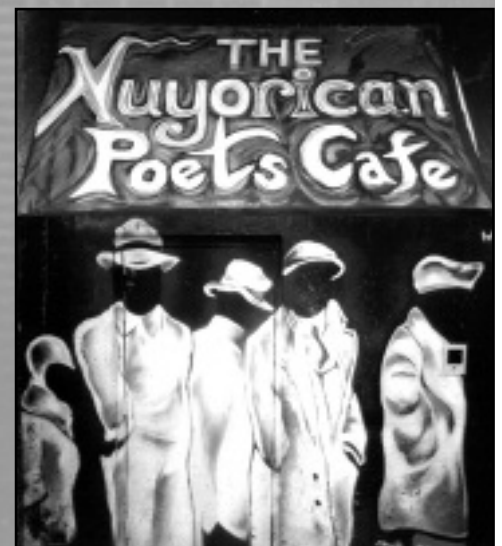
Tribal Soundz



Music Inn



Sweet Rhythm



The Nuyorican Poets Cafe,
(where you'll find Wilson "Chembo" Corniel!)

BONGOCERO OF THE KINGS

Joe Gonzalez— Part II

By Isaac H. Gutwilik

WPR: *I remember sitting in the third row when I saw Mario Bauza that night. And I was watching him move his hips when he was conducting. It was entertaining just to see him. Just to see him from the back was entertaining. There was elegance to his style.*

Gonzalez: Yeah, he was very serious, with the dress code; you had to be with the suit, the shirt and with the tie, with the old school. And he didn't play any games, and on time, he tells us if we start at 9, we start at 9. And if we finish at 12, we finish at 12. Not like now, they tell you to start at 8 and you start at 11, and then you finish late or they push you back. The other day at a gig, a Cuban traditional gig that they do every year with Chico Alvarez and his group Caribe, we were told it's gonna start from 7 to 8, and we got there at 7 but they put someone else on and pushed us back. Yeah, nobody's like really punctual today. Also the musicians come when they wanna come. The business is not like way back when, before my time. The only regulation I can say is that Mario Bauza was very punctual. And the dress code, today the musicians come wearing what they want to. He told me one time, I was backstage and I had my tie in my pocket, and he was questioning me, and I said well I got it in my pocket, he says "well put it on"! We weren't even on stage yet.

WPR: *I'm still doing the weddings. I do about 25 a year. It's the same, you know you come without a tie or if you forget it, I keep a spare, but there's fines. It's real strict.*

Gonzalez: That's the way it should be. People respect the art more that way. People don't respect the music no more and not only the music, the workplace today. You don't even get people that do the job right. Well that's in the music field too. In the music field, it says something about the individual. It says something about the musician. The way they carry themselves, and the way they behave, you get put on stage, they think they're comedians. You know we play music here, but they don't respect the arrangement, they don't respect the arranger. You have to learn the music well. You have to make interpretations, just like if you were the one that wrote it. You have to contribute something to that piece of music, you have to live it. People take it for granted, you know. And you can tell the different class of musician. Today, they relaxed that. These people don't do their homework, they don't do their research. When I came up, I listened to and became part of Mario Bauza's organization. I listened to the great bongo players, Chano Pozo, Jose Mangual, Patato. I did my research. I started collecting. I'm a collector of records. I started listening, so that way when I was able to sit down with that orchestra, I knew what was supposed to be applied. And it paid off. I have my own style, I don't copy anyone. I'm self-taught. Nobody gave me a lesson.

WPR: *That's the beauty about bongos. I think there's a little more freedom on that instrument to express yourself.*

Gonzalez: Freedom, yes, that's what you do, you ad lib. You improvise. You don't only use steady, basic rhythms. It's not like congas, straight time. See, with some people, they play too much. They wanna play too much. There's a time and place for when to play. There are sections, an arrangement, you have to give space.

WPR: *When I listen to you, it's real steady, steady, steady, and then there's a sudden little bongos explosion, a couple of riffs, and then back.*

Gonzalez: Exactly. That's the way it should be. Contributing something to the art. You're improvising plus you're just keeping time because there's so much going on especially with the orchestras. They have the horn arrangements, the saxes, trombones, the trumpets, now you have the bass

and the conga playing the rhythm. You're supposed to keep the time, the arrangement. The writer is writing everything out. Harmonically he's writing everything out. Harmonically, you can't interfere and apply something that's gonna interfere with his writing.

WPR: *When people write charts and give you a chart, do they usually say improvise here, solo there or do they just count off bars?*

Gonzalez: They have solo, percussion time and then breaks. There are some people who don't know how to write for the percussion players. There are some people who write everything down, like if you were to play bass. That's not the way it should be. The way is mostly timed. You count the bars, and then the break. They write out the break because everything is ad-libbed. Some people will write a phrase for the trumpet and then write for the percussionist. For instance, I did a recording with just one number. They hired me and Milton Cardona for it and the guy gave us a chart and he didn't have too much experience in Latin percussion. He gave us a chart where he wrote everything out and we couldn't play that because we would be stopping every bar. We'd be making hits every other bar and you don't do that. You gotta play your rhythms.

WPR: *There was no flow.*

Gonzalez: Right. It was like every other bar was stop, stop, stop, stop. You can't play like that. You have to have constant rhythm and then the breaks, so we were confused, we had to continuously just play and when the breaks were there. There are certain breaks that people who don't know how to write, will put down. You gotta have that experience. You gotta have that knowledge. See, people think it's just Latin Jazz or it's just about the instrument. No, it's the format also. A lot of people are confused. A lot of people are listening to just what they hear today. For some reason they think it's right, but it's not right, especially the mixing of the recording. With mixes, like Mario Bauza says, you got an orchestra, but what makes the orchestra is the percussion section. That's what makes the people dance. You have to hear that. That can't be in the background and that's what a lot of people do today. They're mixing in a way that you don't even hear the instrument because they don't know. That's why when people are recording they get a certain engineer because there are just a few that know what they're doing. So that's a problem also, and band leaders especially should know everything. They should know a little about rhythm, a little about everything. Just like a manager of a baseball team or a captain. The people don't know and it doesn't sound right. The listeners don't get the real appreciation of the music.

WPR: *About the instrument, that's become your trademark instrument. You're more likely to get calls for bongos. (I've seen you on timbales and congas.) Is that something that you're happy with?*

Gonzalez: I'm comfortable with it. I'm happy with it. Bongo is a great instrument because you're doing several things with them. You keep time, you're ad-libbing on the bongo, and then you can pick up the bell so you can take a break from the instrument. You're not constantly playing the bongo. Bongo is a beautiful instrument. You know, it's in between a conga and a timbale. It works around the conga and the timbale when they apply the rhythms so you can take time to do what you wanna do. You're not constantly playing. You're just adding something like adding icing to the cake. It's a great instrument! I feel very comfortable playing the bongo.

WPR: *Do you see the bongos growing in popularity or lessening?*



Gonzalez: I think that it's lessening. They don't use bongos in Cuba as much. The drum set came up in popularity. Over here they still use it, because over there (Cuba), they're more advanced with the music than over here. Over here they're still playing the music from way before. In the big bands, in Afro Cuban jazz, they had bongos at that time but nowadays they're just using drums and congas, they had that songo, timba, etc. They have many different rhythms.

WPR: I think the conguero has picked up some of the bongo role and taken on the quinto role also. Not to mention the drumset.

Gonzalez: Right, bongos they don't use as much, so I've lasted a long time playing bongos!

WPR: Ha ha, last of the Mohicans!

Gonzalez: I'm aware of that. It's very limiting, you can only do so much you know, playing with the bongo. Right, it's like you say, today it's the drums, the drumset hasn't been around forever, but the drums can apply the rhythms of the bongo, and if you know what you're doing, the timbale parts too. They actually eliminated the timbale too because the drum takes that over, takes that rhythm.

WPR: Yeah, add some bells to his kit and there he goes.

Gonzalez: Right. And then he has a timbale, and like you said, the conga gives it the sound, the conga is needed, with the time. Mostly it's taking over the bongo part and the timbale part, so you don't usually find bongos. The drum set originated because of economic concern. Not to hire three guys. You know, let's just get one guy, like Baby Dodds in New Orleans or whoever it was. He was super talented and could do the work of several people. The bar got raised. But when you're playing really authentic, big band Latin music, you need the three, the percussion section, the bongo player, the conga player, and the timbale player or a drummer. If you're playing something modern, something new, you don't need bongos. You'd probably be drowned out anyway in the music today, so you don't even hear it, but it's still a great instrument you know. A lot of people don't play it like they used to play it. It's a different style. But I guess that's what's happening now.

WPR: I asked people, when they wanna order bongo skins, are you a finger guy or do you play with your hands. People are using their fingers very rarely. Would you say there are different schools of players?

Gonzalez: Not that I know of. I try to teach them both. I try to teach them the fingers and the hand. But basically it's with the fingers.

WPR: You work so much. You don't sit at home practicing do you?

Gonzalez: I should practice more. You should always practice. I don't get as much chance to practice because the area I live in, the apartment, you know, I'm afraid of making too much noise. When I used to live in the pro-

jects, not to say that because it's different, but I grew up there and the people knew me, I was able to practice without a problem but here I don't know. The floors, the wooden floors, the sound will go right through, I give lessons, but I give quietly. You don't have to make noise, it's not the loudness, it's the technique.

WPR: So what would be your words of advice for a guy just getting into this instrument?

Gonzalez: I would say that they should listen to a lot of music from the past, the original players, they have CDs, no more LPs but you can get the recordings. And depending on what he wants to play, what type of group he wants to perform with, if it's a Son group, get some players like Arsenio Rodriguez, Chappotin, some Trios. If it's Big Bands, Machito, Tito Puente, Tito Rodriguez, and if it's a Charanga band he can get Orquesta Aragon, he can get Charanga America from Cuba and he can listen to a lot of different groups and listen to the players. Study and play along with the recordings, and learn the music. Learn how to read which is really important and practice as much as he can, practice the right thing, not the wrong thing. If he needs a lesson, take a lesson with a good teacher. They also have videos. They should watch those. Boys Harbor is a great school here in New York, with a lot of great musicians too.

WPR: What about bongos in other kinds of music?

Gonzalez: There are a lot of different types of players who play in different fields of music, guys who play with a different touch, a different feel. I get to know a lot of guys, when it comes to big bands, certain people can play that type, so they go for that type of music, they go for other types of music too, but what I mostly notice with R&B or something, they go for that because it's a totally different thing. And they're hopefully making money. I'm not making that much at all when it comes to what I do. But what I do, not everybody can do. I guess you had to have been brought up, fortunate enough, to play this certain type of music. And that certain type of music is not around as much now. I caught the tail end of it. I was very fortunate to be with Mario Bauza at that time because it was music from before my time. Bauza used to tell me, "You should have been born a long time ago." ▼



Bongos illustration by Anthony J. Stagg

Erica Azim

By Terry Reimer

WPR: Tell us about the mbira, the way it's made and how it is played.

Azim: The type of Shona mbira from Zimbabwe that I play is made from a wood board from the *mubvamaropa* tree in Zimbabwe (also known as *mukwa orptherocarpus angolensis*). There are 22 to 28 steel keys, which can be made from various materials, recycled or not. Softer steel is cold-forged, but harder steel is hot-forged. A bar under the keys, and another bar over the keys, near the top of the soundboard, hold them in place. Near the bottom of the board is a wire with metal beads, or a metal plate with bottle tops attached, to add a shimmering sound to the tone. The mbira is held with the board vertical, and the left thumb strokes down on all of the double row of lower-pitched, larger keys. The right thumb strikes down on the 3 lowest-pitched notes of the single row, with the right forefinger plucking up on the highest-pitched keys.

WPR: Tell us about the Shona music and songs of Zimbabwe. How old is this style?

Azim: The Shona mbira has been played for over 1,000 years, perhaps even 2,000 or 3,000, but this is not known. Before the instrument was invented, the same music was sung by a whole groups of people singing simple parts interlocking in a complex way. Because the music is played to call ancestors to earth, to ask for advice and/or give thanks, the same "classic" repertoire is played century after century to please these ancient beings. With a vast traditional style of improvisation, one can never get tired of playing the same pieces over and over...because they are so different each time!

WPR: Are we in danger of losing this beautiful traditional music?

Azim: Sadly, the most traditional form of the music is indeed in danger of being lost. Many Shona mbira players have quit playing because they, or their wives, belong to Christian sects that forbid it. Others play pop crossover styles that, while fun, do not have the musical or spiritual depth of the ancient tradition. Most of those still doing the music in its most traditional form are older musicians, not young people. I also think that the influence of Western culture makes young people less inclined to the "get out of the way and let the spirits play through you" relationship that the most traditional mbira players have with the music.

WPR: Do all of the songs repeat? They are very soothing.

Azim: A traditional Shona mbira piece consists of a cycle that does repeat, with certain types of traditional improvisation that may change it somewhat every time it is repeated.

Mbira is traditionally used for healing in Zimbabwe, and I have taught a number of music therapists in the US, some of whom have incorpo-



Photo by Terry Reimer

Erica Azim leads a Zimbabwean mbira workshop

rated it in their work. They tell me that the repetition in mbira music aligns all the body processes with its rhythm, not only heartbeat and breathing, but even subtle processes like neurons firing, sometimes resulting in profound healing.

For those interested in an example of how vast the traditional style of Shona improvisation is, I recommend listening to MBIRA CD 3213 *Tadzungaira: A Prayer to End All Suffering* by Forward Kwenda, which includes widely varied performances of the same piece, by the same musician, recorded during a year period (available at www.mbira.org). All of MBIRA's "mbira piece intensive" series also show the great variety of improvisation on each mbira piece.

WPR: Share with us how you got started in your career.

Azim: I first met Shona music in 1970, as a freshman at the University of Washington in Seattle, where Dumisani Maraire was teaching. Although he did not play the traditional mbira, he played a smaller type developed to teach schoolchildren in Zimbabwe. While studying this and other Shona music with him, I heard recordings of the ancient mbira - from 45 rpm singles, vinyl records that he had brought with him from Zimbabwe. I fell in love with the music, and ended up quitting school and working for a long time to save up enough money to go to Zimbabwe and learn the ancient tradition.

WPR: Tell us a bit about your travels to Zimbabwe.

Azim: When I first travelled to Zimbabwe in 1974, I was 20 years old, travelling on my own, and the country was still Rhodesia - pretty much like everything you have heard about apartheid South Africa, but in the throes of a liberation war. Though the situation was very challenging, I was able to learn from several amazing musicians, and play mbira with many others, and I stayed over a year.

WPR: Please share with us what it is like to be honored for your work.

Azim: I have assimilated the traditional Shona perspective that everything about mbira music is from the ancestor spirits, by the spirits, for the spirits. The individual ego has nothing to do with it. Though I do recognize my role in supporting the tradition, making CDs that result

in income and respect for 135 musicians in Zimbabwe, questions like this make me think "its not really about me".

WPR: *Is it unusual to be a woman playing the mbira?*

Azim: There have always been a very few Shona women playing mbira, because their spirits required it. However, there are still many rural Zimbabweans who say they have never seen a woman play mbira, and are more surprised by my gender than my race, as an mbira player! I have taught many women from around the globe to play mbira, and hope that they will also encourage more Shona women to play.

WPR: *You started a non-profit. What is your "work week" like?*

Azim: My non-profit organization, MBIRA (see www.mbira.org), provides people all over the world with information about Shona mbira music, recordings of traditional musicians, traditional Zimbabwean-made instruments, and access to workshops.

My weeks are not typical! I could be teaching an 8-day mbira workshop, 9 am to 10 pm each day. I could be in Zimbabwe, making recordings. I could be teaching a weekend workshop anywhere in the US, then home teaching private lessons and making new CDs from my Zimbabwe recordings. Two things that always take a lot of my time are responding to the many emails I receive each day from all over the world, and tuning the instruments I sell for 11 Zimbabwean mbira makers. The boring stuff like bookkeeping and mailing list maintenance has to fit in too.

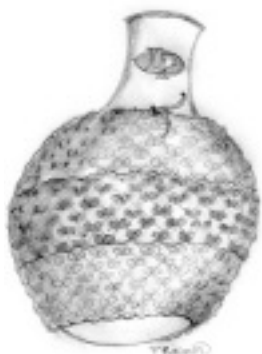


Photo by Terry Reimer

Erica Azim with Larry Millard of EarthCDs

WPR: *What are your future plans?*

Azim: One of the things my organization does is bring Zimbabwean mbira players to teach and perform in the US. I'm working on bringing two women mbira players next year (2008), who have never been here before. I'm excited that, if this is successful, they will be teaching the summer 2008 Mbira Camps with me, and we will be performing together. ▼



Jazz Vibes

By Bob Wessberg bobwessbergmusic.com

A Chicago native, Bob Wessberg received both his Bachelor and Master's Degree in Music from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. Prior to N.U. he studied at the Roy Knapp School of Percussion with Bob Tilles on Vibes and Jose Bethancourt on Marimba. At Northwestern his teacher was Ed Metzenger, principal Tympanist with the Chicago Symphony. During those five years he played with the Art Van Damme Quintet and Dick Schory's Percussion Pops Orchestra.

It will be my attempt in this article to explain my own theory for learning improvisation on the vibraphone. I also want to show how the various phases of my career affected the development of my personal improvisation. The very definition of the word improvisation is "the act, art or result, of composing and rendering music extemporaneously". This affects every musician differently and depends strongly on his/her own personal life and training. It also depends on who the person studied with, but most of all what he or she experienced in their world of live performance from childhood and into their career as it developed.

To even begin to play the vibraphone, one must acquire the basic fundamentals of music theory. You must be able to read chord symbols and even basic lead sheets before you can even start to make progress.

Learning to play with four mallets is a challenging and very necessary steep in becoming an accomplished vibraphonist. It is necessary to learn which four notes of a particular chord give the best sound on the vibe. There are many good instruction books that present the voicing for vibes using the 4 mallets. The Goldenberg book entitled *Modern School* is an excellent study guide offering a progressive method of learning the basic fundamentals for the vibraphone and all mallet instruments.

Balter Mallets has been my one and only source for mallets. I have found that they have provided me with all the necessary tools to perform properly in all areas of my career. My choice for mallet instruments has always been Musser. My instrument is the Century Vibe with closed ends.

During my early teens, I studied vibes with Bob Tilles at the Roy Knapp School of Percussion in Chicago. He was my very first vibe teacher. We started with the basic blue chord changes. He would accompany me on piano and showed me some beginning ideas to begin to create my own improvisation.

During this same time, I was studying with Dick Marx on piano trying to improve the changes on standard fake book tunes. This immediately helped me to get around better on the vibe and try different changes in the process of developing my own style.

During my high school years I had a trio. I played vibes in the trio and



we worked hundreds of weddings and parties right on into my early college days at Northwestern. During these years, we memorized most of our repertoire and hardly ever used music on our gigs. It is my belief that playing all through these early years forced me to gain excellent control and command of the vibraphone.

As an undergraduate at Northwestern, I was approached to play marimba with the Xavier Cugat Orchestra. My marimba teacher at this time was Jose Bethancourt, and he encouraged me to join Cugat. There were no marimba parts available, and I was given guitar parts and asked to create my own background for many of their charts. My early training came in very handy and was put to immediate use.

While in college I played vibes with the Art Van Damme Quintet that immediately required the ability to read very difficult parts and take choruses on every tune that was played. It was important to listen to the others and try to imitate what they were doing. We recorded three albums, traveled quite a bit, and also appeared on many "live" TV variety shows such as the *Today Show* in New York, *Marty Faye* in Chicago, and *Mike Douglas* in Cleveland. We also appeared at the Desert Inn in Vegas for a month.

During my college years, I was a featured member of the Percussion Pops Orchestra, which produced over a dozen albums for RCA. The albums were recorded at Orchestra Hall in Chicago under the direction of Dick Schory. The acoustics were incredible and the results were a major breakthrough for RCA and the world of percussion. There were many opportunities for me to improvise on many mallet instruments, including the vibes, chimes, xylophone, marimba, orchestra bells and tubular bells. A very young Gary Burton was a member of this group for a few albums. It was a pleasure to work with him before he developed into a giant in the "vibe" world.

A few years after leaving Northwestern, I became active in the jingle business, recording music for radio and television commercials. I became contractor for Dick Marx and Associates, who was the largest

Music Packager for radio and TV commercials, industrial films, and a few movies. We also made music tracks to be used at SeaWorld and Magic Mountain in California.

Some interesting personal experiences during this time were as follows: We had the Hamm's Beer account and the jingle called "*From the Land of Sky Blue Waters*", which required a small Indian tom tom. I played this special tom tom on hundred's of spots. Also, we had the Marlboro account that used the theme music from the *Magnificent Seven* movie. I was fortunate to be the timpani player on hundreds of Marlboro spots. We also did many Kellogg's cereal tracks. Do you remember "*snap, crackle, pop- Rice Krispies*"? I was the crackle (ratchet) on all these spots.

This lasted for about 23 years before the synthesizer began to take over. Suddenly the need for live musicians in the studio began to fade. It was during this period that I freelanced and played in the orchestra for just about every act in show business as they came to appear in the many Chicagoland venues. My most memorable experience was touring with Frank Sinatra for the last four years of his career.

There were numerous opportunities to play Broadway shows and I was fortunate to do *A Chorus Line*, *Dancin'*, *Sound of Music*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Cats* for more than a year. The recording studios in Chicago were very popular and many well known artists produced their albums there.

All of these musical opportunities provided many different challenges to me as a mallet player. It is very necessary to listen to recordings of players that you admire. We all had our favorites and would try to copy their style and develop it with our own ideas.

An example of this is when I was young, every player tried to copy Lionel Hampton. Now, even though he was responsible for bringing the vibes into the limelight with Benny Goodman and then his own band, his style became very dated. Players like Milt Jackson, Cal Tjader and later Gary Burton dramatically changed the way vibes were played. Gary never uses the motor, and of course, Milt's sound features the slow vibrato. While in New York as a young man, I went to see and hear the Modern Jazz Quartet at the Village Vanguard. I stood in absolute awe as I listened to Milt Jackson perform, and at that point I knew this was how I wanted to play vibes and have tried to copy his style to this day.

In teaching Show Percussion and Jazz Improvisation at DePaul University, I quickly became aware that the students who had a piano background and basic theory knowledge advanced at a faster rate. With these two elements, a person can be taught to read charts that contain chord symbols and begin to ad-lib.

I believe that being able to ad-lib is something that you are born with. There are three actual ways to improvise. The first is to play around with the actual melody by embellishing and adding notes in and around the melody. Next, is to ad-lib within the chordal structure without trying to follow the actual melody. Finally, you can do a little of both which makes for the most interesting interpretation and is



most pleasing to listen to and understand.

The vibraphone is still virtually an unknown instrument. People don't realize they are hearing the vibes everyday in their own supermarket, in restaurants, hotels, and on radio and television.

My career has been very rewarding in so many ways. It was because I was able to do so many different things and put my experiences to work to my advantage. You will find vibraphone parts all throughout classical music. In my personal career it seems that I am playing more vibes in public places than ever before. A few people have even come up and said "what a great sounding vibe". This will always make me smile. ▼

photo by Jennifer Horton

Chicago Rhythm Scene

All photos
by Terry Reimer
(except 63rd Street)



Chinese Fine Art Society-
Evanston Ethnic Arts Fest



Chicago Didjeridu Chorus at Harris Theatre- Tibetan Buddhist Benefit



Escola de Samba of Evanston-
Evanston Ethnic Arts Festival



Gilberto Serna (Deagan Marimbas)
at Kane County



Hannah Ford at Kane County



Muntu Dance Theatre- Evanston Ethnic Arts Festival



Vieux Farka Toure - OTS Folk & Roots Festival



Lenny Marsh & Kids Rhythm Circle, OTS, Folk & Roots Festival



Grupo Fantasma- Old Town School Folk & Roots Fest



Mama Africa & Silas King at N'Ama Rose-Park Forest, Ellie Pickering's Studio



Kane County Vintage and Custom Drum Show



Omar Sosa (left) at the (now defunct) HotHouse



Read My Hips- OTS Folk & Roots Fest



Photo by Malik

63rd Street Drummers



All artwork by
Anthony Stagg



Rhythms of Brazil

Compiled by Terry Reimer

Brazilian Samba Festival

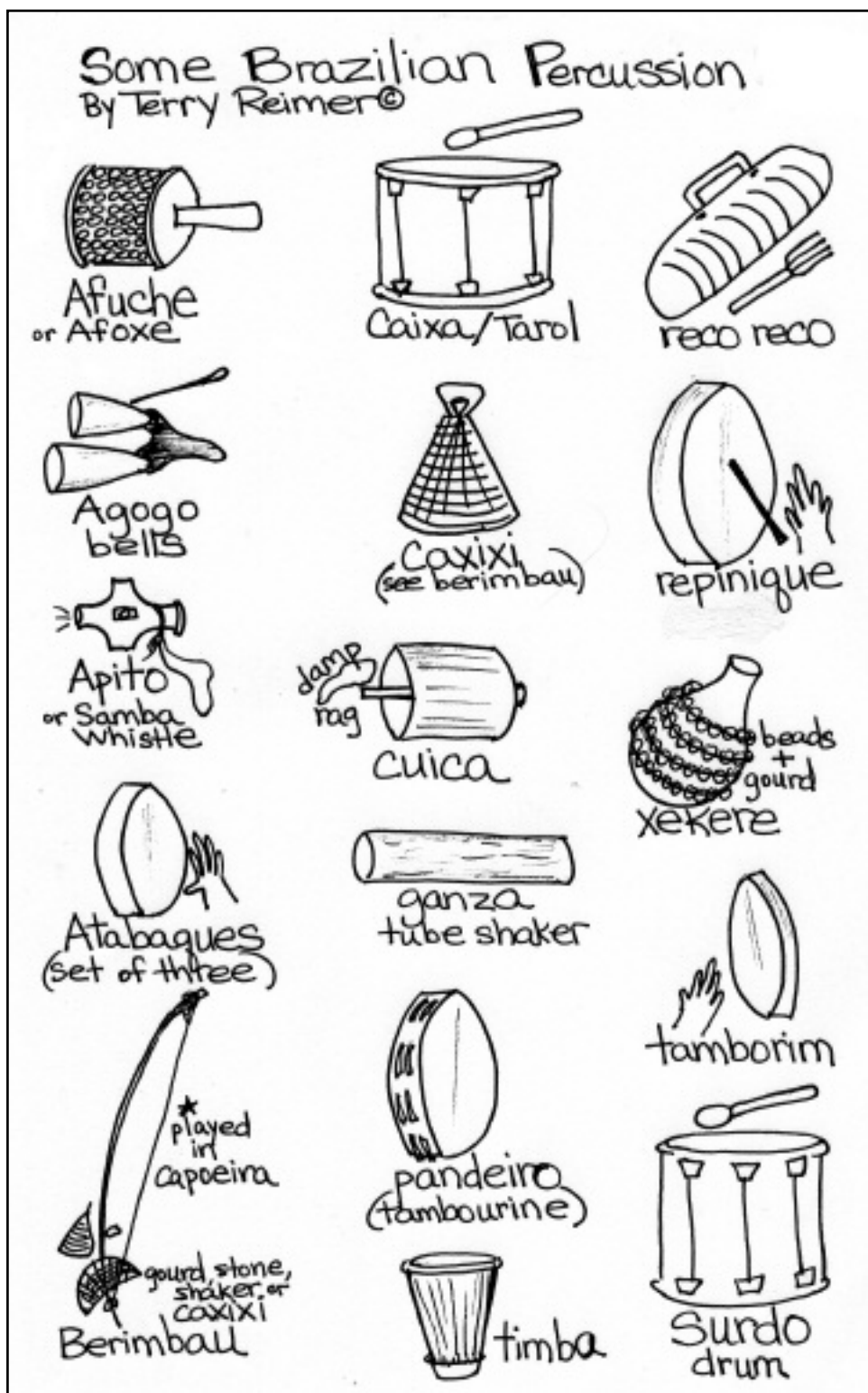
Since its inception in 1928, the Escola de Samba has been an integral part of Carnival and Brazilian folklore. Literally translated it means "School of Samba" but these are not schools in the traditional sense. They began as musical clubs or societies, where musicians, dancers and the interested general public get together to play music, organize Carnival parading and partake in other festive activities. Although they presently maintain the same purpose, today their role in Carnival and in Brazilian society in general, is more similar to a cultural institution. The institution of the Escola has not only grown to become a grand spectacle during Carnival, but Escolas are sometimes the center of community activities. There are presently some fifty to sixty registered Escolas and countless others that exist purely for the people involved. The official Escolas prepare all year for the competition of the Carnival parade. The Escolas are judged on their theme, the Enredo. Carnival takes place in February each year.

Escola Carnival Presentation

There are very strict guidelines for the Escola Carnival presentation. The four sections of the Escola are the Ala, the Wing, the Ala de Balanas and Coinissao de Frente.

List of the Directors and sections of a typical Escola:

- 1) Carnavalesco: Artistic Director/Choreographer
- 2) Ala de Baines: Wing dedicated to the Bahian tias
- 3) Passistas: Master dancers of the Samba for the Escola
- 4) Porta: Bandeira flag bearer of the Escola's flag
- 5) Maestre Sala: Master of Ceremonies
- 6) Carros Alegoricos: Decorated parade floats depicting the theme
- 7) Destiaque: Members wearing lavish costumes riding on top of the floats
- 8) Directores de Harmonia: Directors/Organizers
- 9) Mestre de Bateria: Leader of the Bateria, the percussion section
- 10) Puxador: Lead singer



KoSA XII— Johnson, VT



Aldo Mazza and Dr. Jolan Kovacs-Mazza awarded Lifetime Achievement Awards to (from left to right) Carmine Appico, Memo Acevedo, Mike Clark, and Glen Velez (not pictured) at KoSA XII.



Conga



Steel Pans



Bata



Drum Kit



Teachers



Drum Kit



Aldo Mazza



Cajons



Djembes



Ensemble



Taiko



Shaker



Outdoor Group

I play are from the ballets. The rhythms of the ballet are taken from traditional rhythms and we modify them. We do them for a performance. The difference is that traditional rhythms are linked or go together with a history. For example, if we play for a circumcision ritual we only play two rhythms but when we play a show for one and a half hours, we can play 20 rhythms but they are very small. It's for the show. This is why actually there is a lot of confusion. There are people who teach the rhythms of the ballet and say they are traditional rhythms but that is false. It's really, really bad because the information is not correct. In traditional rhythms there are no breaks, there are no arrangements. It's just direct to the ceremony. That's the difference between the ballet and the creation (we create rhythms) and the tradition. If Taylor created a rhythm, that's one thing. In the ballet they can create a rhythm or mix a lot of things and put their creation inside traditional rhythms. You could do tradition and ballet, but they're two different things.

WPR: *I've heard that the rhythm, "sofa" is a rhythm played for the hunter and others think it's played for the warrior.*

Keita: If someone tells you that sofa is played for the hunter, tell them that is false. Tell them Mamady Keita said we never, never, ever play for hunters. They have their own instruments and their own rhythms. They have their own griots [storytellers]. There again, is more confusion from the ballet. In the ballet we did one piece called "Mande Mory" (a big hunter) who is the little brother of Sunjata Keita. We tell his story in this piece on the stage. There are parts where there is dancing inside the ballet and that was the part where there was dancing. For that dance we played sofa because it worked well together with the dance rhythm and when we did that it wasn't sofa tradition. There are people who don't know the history. You should never take your djembe and play behind the hunters. They have their instruments called "n'goni". We call the hunters "donso" in the Malinke. The griots of the hunters are called "serewa". They have their music. They don't need us and our music. It doesn't work.

WPR: *What are some of the traditional ceremonies you play for?*

Keita: We play traditional ceremonies for marriage, circumcision, baptism, the fest of the pond (fishing), the fest of the cultivators, the fest for the women who ask for a wish, like Moribayasa. There are also rhythms we play for the fetishers and that we play to welcome people to the village. Everything that humans can do as a ceremony, we play it, because the djembe is a symbol of joy.

WPR: *Tell us more about the fetishers.*

Keita: It's difficult to explain because you don't really know it here. For example, a fetisher could be a master of plants. We do an initiation for special people because you can't be a fetisher without an initiation. They know the good from the bad plants and know the secrets of nature. Everything is in relation to nature. We play djembe for their festival.

WPR: *You hear a lot of people say that women should not play the djembe drum.*

Keita: The women where we live did not traditionally play the djembe. The women created the popular rhythms before the creation of the djembe. When there was an event, the women sang the situation, clapped their hands and danced. The women say they are the organizers of the party, the singers and dancers, so men should play the djembe to accompany them.

The blacksmiths created the djembe with respect to nature first. In the past it was only the Mandings who played the djembe and then it evolved. There's not anyone in the Manding who said women cannot play djembe. There's no law against that. When I started to teach in Conakry we were at a marriage fest. I organized my students to play in the true context for one part. When we played there were old women and old men who put money on the foreheads of women who played because it was completely incredible, but 100% positive. So the African women there came to bless them. They told me "It's thanks to you that we see white people play and women too. Our grandparents never saw this. If we see this today, I hope God gives you a long life. You've really given us a good hour." That's an old Guinean tradition. There's no interdiction. I've brought my students inside Balandugu, inside the true tradition. What these people say today is, "when are you going to bring the students again?" For example, my wife has played with the big masters and they want to see her play again. Now I've opened the eyes of the women in Guinea. Now we have a group there where it's just women, called "Les Amazones".

WPR: *Do you worry that in the future, traditional songs and ceremonies will be lost?*

Keita: The thing that worries me is that the young people don't want to learn the true tradition. There are some, but only a few. Everyone wants to play ballet. Ballet is not traditional. That's one of the reasons I created the schools of the djembe. We teach only the traditions. If we do teach creation, we inform the students that this is creation and not tradition. Now I'm fighting to keep tradition alive in the world.

WPR: *Drum circles are everywhere, especially in the "white world" of djembe.*

Keita: I'm not going to criticize drum circles but drum circles don't interest me at all. After five minutes I get a headache because I don't see the reason why. For example, the participation of the djembe in the drum circle...I've seen it... the person next to you...what he and you are playing is completely different. No one is listening to anyone else. Everyone is on their own planet, their own universe. There's no communication between people. That's not for me. I put myself completely outside of drum circles because it's not a tradition. It doesn't call me.

WPR: *Do you read music and whom do you listen to?*

Keita: I don't read music. I listen to everybody; jazz, rock and roll, Indian music, Western European music, Japanese, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean groups. When I play other forms, I add traditional Guinean music and rhythms to theirs. I don't play "jazz", I play djembe, no problem. For all music, I take my djembe and play with them. If it's reggae I'm going to play their rhythm. I can adapt my rhythm. All the rhythms, I can adapt.

WPR: *Tam Tam Mandingue is non-profit. Do you have any business training?*

Keita: I learned in the school of life. You just gotta' ask. The old people in our home say the person who asks can't make a mistake. If I arrive in Chicago and know nothing and have to catch a plane to Hong Kong, there are people there to answer my questions. They'll guide me. I call this the school of life. So I formed my group, Tam Tam Mandingue and it just started to work.

WPR: *Do you still practice? Any advice for others?*

Mamady Keita concludes on page 28

CDs • Videos • Books REVIEWS

Compiled by Terry Reimer

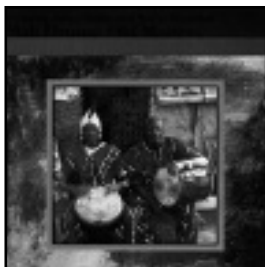


Irene Chigamba and Erica Azim

Live in concert in Berkeley, CA, 2006 (Mbira)

Zimbabwe's mbira is a traditional instrument of the Shona people, which has been played for over 1,000 years for religious rituals, royal courts and social occasions. It consists of 22 to 28 metal keys mounted on a hardwood soundboard and is usually played inside a large calabash resonator (deze). The keys are played with the two thumbs plucking down and the right forefinger plucking up. An mbira consists of a basic cyclical pattern,

which includes numerous intertwined melodies, often with contrasting rhythms. At traditional ceremonies (mapira), ancestors (vadzimu) and ancient tribal guardian spirits (mhondoro and makombwe are called by performing their favorite songs; thus, the same pieces are retained in the repertoire over the centuries. Chigamba and Azim stay true to this style and entrance with soothing beautiful renditions.

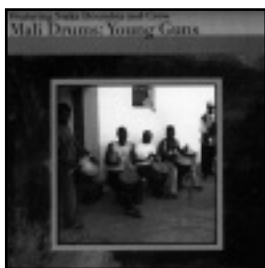


Mali Drums: Old Masters

Aruna Sidibe and Brulye Dombia (EarthCDs)

These very special recordings, were produced on location in Mali by Michael Pluznick with the assistance of Paul Chandler. Proceeds from sales go to the musicians. Each song or rhythm is traditional and reflects the celebrations for harvest, burial, for big festivals, a strong man's dance or tilling the fields after a rain. Some get their name from the masks worn for the dance.

Drummers come to play while the people work to keep them in rhythm. The music makes their work easier. The djembe and dundun rhythm language is so intricate, each rhythm is distinct to the song and ritual.



Mali Drums: Young Guns

Siaka Dombia and Crew (EarthCDs)

Again, EarthCDs has manufactured and distributed some of the most traditional and rare field recordings. These djembe, dundun and bell rhythms played by five of the Crew to accompany rituals in the village. The recordings were done at the Centre Togola in Sabalibougou and are clear and full. These rhythms celebrate marriage (Danza), special occasions such as dance competitions for young men or the harvest party rhythm (Madan). Other

rhythms accompany the rite of circumcision (Suku), and are played during the months leading up to the initiation. Tansole rhythm is used when a leading group of women transfer their positions to a younger group. Fascinating!



Chembo Wilson Corniel

For The Rest Of Your Life (Chemboro Records)

Congratulations are in order for Chembo on his latest CD in Afro-Cuban-Jazz. He is "at the top of his game", "pulls no punches". It has made the rounds in the Latin Grammys for the Best Latin Jazz and Best Engineered CD! Grady Tate's silky voice adds grace and elegance, Chembo brings fresh vitality, Ivan Renta is on sax (tenor and soprano) Tino Derado on piano, Rubin Rodriguez on bass and Vince Cherico on drums. Many special and

featured guests add excitement. The band cuts loose on top of masterfully manipulated rhythms such as mambo, rumba de cajon, guaguanco, bomba, abacua, bolero, chachacha, bata, songo and straight ahead jazz. Chembo has been holding court at Nuyorican Poets Cafe in the East Village, New York. Creative, eye-opening and unpredictable, true to its African percussive origins, Chembo does it again!



Bobby Matos

Charanga Chango (LifeForceJazz Records)

Producer, Composer, Arranger, Educator and percussionist extraordinaire, Bobby Matos plays timbales, congas, clave, quinto, bongo, guiro coro and scat vocals! He's dedicated these recordings to all the musicians who've gone before like the greats; Machito, Bird, Mario, Diz, Chano, Trane, Miles, Tito Rodriguez, Buyu, Puente, Bobo, Mongo, Lennon, Harrison, Farjardo, Celia,

Barretto, Hilton...In this music you can hear their legacy and feel the spirit of Latin Jazz soar. His band is all the best; Larry Harlow, Eliseo Borrero, Robertito Melendez and many more. Their music celebrates the best of the Afro Latin dance forms and takes it all a step further, with plenty of sabor!



Francisco Aguabella y su Grupo Oriza

Canta Lazaro Galarra (Francisco Aguabella)

This CD is a wonderful example of the West Coast Master's music; true Oriza, Bembe and AfroCuban music, traditional and compelling. The songs progress from opening the crossroads with Elegua (Güiro), to Ogun (Bacosó), Ochosi (Güiro), San Lazaro (Dajome), Aggayu (Güiro), Chango (Güiro), Obatala (Güiro-Bacosó), Obba (Bacosó),

Oya (Bembé), Yemaya (Rezo-Güiro) and Ochun (Yesá). Aguabella is the force behind these drums, bells and shekere, driving the group to trance-inducing rhythms and strong spirit. I've always admired the man and hope to feature him in depth one day. He is a treasure, keeping the fundamental spiritual music of the Yoruba people alive. He was the winner of a National Heritage Fellowship in 1992 in Washington, DC.



Cyro Baptista

Love the Donkey (Tzadik)

Brazilian percussionist Baptista follows his first brilliant CD for Tzadik, Beat the Donkey, with this CD featuring a wild band of percussionists, dancers and musicians in a varied program of songs and instrumentals. This is an intense CD that captures all the fun and unpredictable excitement of his astonishing live shows. Included is a bonus Quicktime video of the band. Cyro Baptista

always creates new sounds with all kinds of percussive instruments from the more traditional (surdo, caxixi, udu drums, triangle, woodblock, pandeiro, drums, guitar, bass, vocals or bongos, repique, timbales) to the outrageous (zabumba, minimoog, accordion, raasta bells, fire extinguisher, abacus, high and low sirens, Japanese poetry! and jingle basket!).



Ileana Santamaria

What I Want (ileanasantamaria.com)

The daughter of the legendary conguero and Santo, Mongo Santamaria, Ileana exudes the talent and beautiful spirit of her father. She's the lead and backing vocalist, creative director and producer. Her band includes Pedro Martinez on percussion, drumset, musical direction and vocals, Ernesto Simpson on drums, Jair Valencia on Peruvian cajón and congas and Gilmar

Gomes on Brazilian percussion. Piano, bass, guitar, tenor sax, flute and trumpets round out the soulful and driving sounds of jazz and AfroCuban beats, always with her clear and serene voice wafting over it all. Ileana Santamaria thanks her father for his "soul, spirit and rhythm and for being the best example an aspiring artist could ever have".



**Music of Sierra Leone, Vol 5
Susu of Lungi (EarthCDs)**

EarthCDs captures traditional music, recorded in Lungi-town, Kaffu Bullom chiefdom. This CD showcases the Susu, one of the major minority ethnolinguistic groups in Sierra Leone. Their origin can be traced to Mali as far back as the 13th Century. The Susu eventually migrated and settled in the Futa Jalon, in present-day Guinea. A unique style of singing characterizes their wonder-

ful traditional music that defies prosaic description. The songs often praise achievements or family lineage. The singers must be well versed in the genealogy of patrons. The small drums of the *bote lama* and *bote hungbe* are accompanied by a large bell and the *balangi* (wooden tine marimba-type instrument).



Deccan Dance

Natraj (Galloping Goat Productions)

This CD is contemporary jazz with influences from India and Africa. Phil Scarff leads with soprano sax and tamboura. The music combines electric violin, bass, Indian tabla, West African *axatse*, Ghanaian *gunгон*, Venezuelan *maracas*, Tibetan bells, Nigerian clay drums, drum set and Egyptian *riq*, among other instruments. Traditional, classical Indian ragas or rhythmic sequences

combine with music of Ghanaian master drummer Abubakari Lunna who shares music from the Dagamba people of northern Ghana. Raga Bhairavi encourages disciplined chromatic departure from the basic scale. Spontaneous improv, classical forms, jazz melodies, ragas, rhythm and drums combine and find common ground between them, in this lyrical music.



Esntion Latino

Sampler (Esntion Records)

This Sampler is an amazing compilation of some of the most exciting salsa, guaguanco, guaracha, rumba, chacha, reggaeton, danzon and Latin dance bands from Chicago, New York and Miami. Each song is tight, produced really well, danceable to say the least and evocative of the great musicians who have influenced a whole new generation.

Batista, Lefty Perez, La Tira, Frankely, Dino

Latino, DJ Papito Red and Grupo Fuego are featured with one or two songs each. This is the kind of music you can turn up in the car and drive all day or get out on the floor and dance all night!



**Travel the World with Putumayo
Putumayo compilation (Putumayo)**

This CD featured a global journey of melodic songs from 12 separate Putumayo collections! It is a great introduction to the world of Putumayo and all the different kinds of music they produce. Some of the tracks are Pump Me Up by Krosfyah, Poncho Sanchez' Besame Mama (Mongo Santamaria) from Conga Blue, Baka Beyond with Ohureo,

Toure Kunda's Wadini, Kotoja's Sawale and many more. Each song embodies the spirit and excellence of the artists and gives the listener a wide variety of world music sounds from these completely danceable rhythms of exotic tropical islands to the Celtic, Irish and Scottish endearing and haunting melodies.



Emilio Torro Y Su Trio

Homenaje A Compositores Puertorriqueños (Peramar Records)

Some of the best Puerto Rican artists are featured on this CD. Nestor Cruz, Teresa Martinez, Jose Almodovar, Ramon Rivero, Johnny Rodriguez, Placido Acevedo, Noel Estrada, Chago Alvarado, German Lugo, Bobby Capo, D.R., Julio Alvarado and Roberto Cole are each given a chance to shine and they certainly do justice to their

roots! Every song is sensuous, danceable, melodic and evocative of true Puerto Rican flavor. Boleros, Vals and a Criolla are featured. A great introduction to the modern Puerto Rican sounds! This CD is a must for the aficionado who appreciates the "three Boricuas" composers of Emilio, Rolando and Nestor. Que bueno!



Flippomusic

Ganesh (Flippomusic)

All of the compositions on this CD are by David Flippo except American Crawl by Dan Hesler. Flippo plays acoustic piano, keys, "crawlaphone" and vocals. Aras Biskis plays dumbek, bongos, congas, djembe, African talking drum, giant garbage can and stack 'o cymbals and beads! Tabla is also featured and flute, sax and bass round out the sound on melodic

lines derived from Middle Eastern grooves. Some of the songs such as Camel Trot, Ganesh and the Battle of Shiva and Ganesh refer to Indian ragas and others reflect Irish jigs or "American Crawl" as they call it. Whatever you call it, their sound is a fascinating blend of cultures and rhythms that make for an intriguing CD.



Ballydowse

The Land, the Bread and the People (Grrrrrecords.com)

Andrew Mandell leads and amazing lineup that includes instruments such as highland pipes, uilleann pipes, Uptown Tibetan throat singing, didgeridoo, whirligig, bodhran, bullroarer and mandolin along with bass, guitar, drums and vocals. These are certainly not traditional arrangements but they sound as if they are. The suffering

of the people and the rich heritage of the northern lands, windy and strong is reflected in songs to the sea, the revolution, politics, religion, a poor land's labours, the red hands of reaction, breaking the mold of the fathers, the winds of change. It is hopeful music and strong.



Ralph Irizarry

Son Café (BKS Records)

Ralph Irizarry plays timbal and leads this great group in his first live DVD. Discovered by Ray Barretto in the late 70's, Irizarry was a founding member of Ruben Blades' Seis de Solar, performed with many including Cachao, Gloria Estefan and Tito Puente. He was a featured actor in Hollywood in 1991 with Antonio Banderas and Armand Assante in the Mambo Kings. He founded Timbalaye in '96, recorded live Bailando con Azucar and Tributo in '04 and '06. His songs are tributes to La Lupe, Ray Barretto, Charlie Palmieri. It is especially great to be able to experience Irizarry's infectious spirit and timbale genius live!

Keita: I finished practicing. I do, but it's with my group when we do new shows. For students I say simply the first thing is that students must work with a master. I say this to the whole world. People take the djembe and just play in their own corner of the world. They're just making noise. The djembe is an art. You have to be informed what is this djembe. Who created this djembe? What is the philosophy? What is the spirituality? Who is a djembefola? You can't know this without following a master. After that the student must have the three sounds of the djembe. After that, the rhythms come. Then if you really work seriously you're going to have progress. What is also very interesting is that when students arrive at the certification level, they should take a trip to the country of the djembe. The djembe in America, Europe or Japan is different than the djembe in Africa. The djembe was born in the Manding. That's where you're going to find a lot of information. That's also where you'll see the contact between the djembe and the dance, the djembe and the traditional event it's played for and you'll see how these ceremonies come to pass. That's in the true tradition, the true context. So I advise students to continue their work. The djembe is not just for Africa. The djembe is for all human beings. The djembe doesn't know colors or borders or sex. The djembe knows if someone who is learning it is someone who respects the djembe, respects he who created the djembe and respects the continent and culture of the djembe.

WPR: *How should you care for the djembe skin? Should you put oil on it or wash it or ever loosen it?*

Keita: No, nothing, never. You have to keep it dry in a dry place that's not too humid. Just keep it like it is in a good bag. You have to pull it up [rope tuning] to get any good sound from it. I don't like factory made djembes. They're not for me. I don't like the sound. I'm not endorsed by anyone, just me. I am my own sponsor.

WPR: *Do you have any hobbies?*

Keita: I really like sports a lot. I love watching soccer (not American.) I love cinema/film and when I have time, I like to walk around in nature. I'm so very close to nature. There's something between me and nature. I love nature.

WPR: *What are you most proud of?*

Keita: That's an easy question. The djembe. The future for me is to guard and protect this tradition. ▼



Guinean road- 2005

Mamady's new drum from Moungam-
with Taylor and Amon
(photo by Peter Schaupp)-2002



QuestFest, 2007

www.questensemble.org



Opening Spectacle



Quentin Shaw & Heather McQueen



Alexander Duvel



Jason Bowen
Quest Managing Director



Chicago Aissawa Project



Afro-Latin Percussion Ensemble



Claire Feeney
Quest Operations Manager



Dahui

All photos by
Terry Reimer



The Gathering; Women's Drum Circle



Aimee Bass, & Del
Quest Artistic Dir. of Percussion



Chicago Didjeridu Chorus



Hazel Aura



Kaiju Daiko

Of Note

Compiled by Terry Reimer

November is International Drum Month!

Evelyn Blakey, jazz vocalist and eldest daughter of drummer and leader Art Blakey, passed in August. John Lucien, jazz pop vocalist from Tortola, passed. Ralphie Barbosa, roadie for Tito Puente passed

Harlem, New York City: Summer 2007

The Marcus Garvey Park drum circle that has been going strong for a long time, encountered some trouble this summer as some of the new neighborhood residents tried to shut them down. After a standoff, police backed down and the drummers continue the right to express themselves as always!!!



Marcus Garvey Park drum circle

Illustration by Anthony J. Stagg

**WORLD
& PERCUSSION
& RHYTHM**

**SUBSCRIBE
Today!
4 issues**

On the pulse of the Global Drum Community

Complete the form below (please print) and send it with \$12.00 to: Terry Reimer, World Percussion and Rhythm, 1020 W. Wellington #1F Chicago, IL 60657

Do not send cash. Make checks or money orders payable to **World Percussion and Rhythm**. Back issues available – call (773) 348-0966.

Name _____

Street address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

REPERCUSSIONS Letters to the Editor

You've done an awesome job on *World Percussion and Rhythm* magazine! I commend you on the new issue. It's beautiful! I'd like to invite you back stage whenever I'm in town. Keep checkin' My Space. —Jay Puente

I own a shop in Tennessee dealing in all kinds of beads and from Africa too. I found *WPR* stuck between the seats of my car. It was from your seventh year. I guess I got it in Tennessee somewhere. I read it all the way through! It's quite good, quite fascinating, with great interviews. It sparked my interest. I have a few djembe drums in the store, so I was intrigued. Great articles. I'd like to order all of you back issues and subscribe. Congratulations on your tenth anniversary! —Phil Lovett, Tennessee

Classifieds

GO TO PERCUSSIONMUSIC.COM for a huge selection of drum and percussion instructional materials. We carry instructional videos, DVD's and CD's for all drum and percussion instruments, for congas, bongos, djembe, tabla, timbales and much more! We also carry sheet music and books.

