

MICHAEL J. TAYLOR

PERCUSSIONIST AND MUSIC EDUCATOR, SPECIALIZING IN THE WEST AFRICAN DEJEMBE DRUM

418 S. Taylor, Oak Park, IL 60302

773-909-8633

Email: Taylor@holygoat.com

Website: <http://www.holygoat.com>

Personal Synopsis :

- A dynamic and enthusiastic bi-racial [author](#), teacher, entrepreneur, video/recording artist, performer, founder of [Holy Goat Percussion](#), a [Tam Tam Mandingue Djembe Academy Senior Certified Instructor](#)* and Director of the Tam Tam Mandingue Djembe Academy-Chicago School of Percussion, and Lead Facilitator at [Sewa Beats](#), Intl. He has studied, performed and/or recorded with a wide range of artists and organizations on 6 continents (nothing in Antarctica yet), including [Grand Master Drummers Mamady Keita](#), [Famoudou Konate](#), [Bolokada Conde](#), members of [Les Ballets Africains](#), [Ballets Djoliba](#)
- *For video examples, click '[djembist](#)'*

University Education

- **Bachelor of Science degree in Communications, major in Public Relations, minor in Philosophy, Illinois State University, 1991**

Professional Experience

- Delivered numerous corporate programs internationally and domestically with [Sewa Beats, Intl.](#), since 2017
- Taught and/or performed with Grand Master Drummer Mamady Keita at TTMDA International Workshops, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 Monterrey, Mexico
- Djembe teaching tour Aug-Sept, 2010 and 2011, multiple cities in China, co-sponsored by Toning (Beijing) Culture and Development Co Ltd., and The Shanghai Percussion Association
- Performance tour of various cities in Japan, with Master Drummer Mamady Keita and TTMDA, Intl., Aug. 2009
- Performance tour, Upper Guinea, West Africa with Master Drummer Mamady Keita and Tam Tam Mandingue, Intl, Dec. 2007
- Month-long study trips in Guinea, West Africa 1997, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2007
- Youth Program Quality training modules: Active Learning, Scaffolding for Success, Structure and Clear Limits, Reframing Conflict (1/11/11), Cooperative Learning (1/13/10), Ask-Listen-Encourage (1/13/10)
- Advanced Youth Development (AYD) training levels 1-4, sponsored by After School Matters
- Arthur Hull's "Facilitator's Playshop", facilitators intensive study program
- **Appeared in 2008 documentary film "Messengers of Tradition"** produced by Grand Master Drummer Mamady Keita, chronicling a trip to Mamady's village of birth, Balandugu Djomawagna, Guinea, West Africa, as part of a group of his most elite students from around the world.
- Appeared in independent film "Southside With You" about Barack and Michelle Obama's first date, Chicago, IL.
- Time Magazine's 2006 Person of the Year

Main instrumentation:

Djembe, dunun, bugaraboo, congas, frame drum, bongos, doumbek

Type of instruction:

West African (djembe/dunun) rhythms, djembe/dunun technique & improvisation.

Current On-Going Employment:

- 2017 to current [Adjunct Faculty at DePaul University](#), Chicago, Theatre School, teaching djembe and accompanying Kimosha Murphy's West African Dance classes – contact Kimosha Murphy, 773-719-7273
- 2017 to current Lead Facilitator at [Sewa Beats USA](#), delivering corporate team building programs in the areas of leadership, collaboration, communication, and change management.
Contact: Bill Scheidt: 336-408-5254
- 2012 to current: Djembe/dunun faculty instructor (high school) at [Chicago Waldorf School](#), Chicago
Contact: Sylvie Desouches, 773-465-2662
Business, Sole Proprietor – [Tam Tam Mandingue Djembe Academy-Chicago](#), specializing in
- to current: teaching traditional djembe music and rhythms, and supporting oral traditions of the Mande, West Africa
- 2000 to current: Performer and Teaching Artist with [Urban Gateways](#)
Contact: Jill LeCesne Potter, 312.922.0440 ext. 2751

- 1997 to current: Djembe/dunun instructor, Adult Program and Outreach Program [Old Town School of Folk Music](#), Chicago
 Contact: Krista Ortgiesen - 773-751-3327; Kate Walsh - 773-751-3337
- 1995 to current: Business, Sole Proprietor - [Holy Goat Percussion](#), specializing in sales of authentic, hand crafted West African instruments, djembe/dunun repairs and maintenance, and performances

Residencies With Universities:

- **ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT ILLINOIS WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY**, 2003, 2005, 2006, , 2009, 2010, 2013, 2016, 2018
 Contact: Prof. Rebecca Gearhart, 309-556-3921
- **GUEST ARTIST - NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY PERCUSSION DEPT.**, 2010, 2021
 - Contact: Distinguished Teaching Professor, Robert Chappell, 815-753-7953
- **ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MUSIC EDUCATION, EVANSTON, IL** May, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2014, 2015
 - Contact: Formerly Dr. Carlos Abril, Ph.D.; currently Amy Gwinn-Becker 847-467-1606
- **IOWA DAYS OF PERCUSSION FESTIVAL '09 AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**, 2009
 - Contact: Prof. Randy Hogencamp, 319-273-2228
- **ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT DEPAUL UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THEATRE, CHICAGO, IL** Jan, 2007
 - Contact: Claudia Anderson, 773-325-4661
- **ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE AT UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA**, 2003
 - Contact: Prof. Randy Hogencamp, 319-273-2228

Residencies With Youth (some ongoing):

- Artist in Residence (teaching djembe and dunun) in numerous Chicago Public Schools, via the Old Town School of Folk Music 6/2004 to current; youth various ages in various schools
 - Contact – Kate Walsh, 773-751-3337
- Lead Teaching Artist (teaching djembe and dunun), Gallery 37/After School Matters, schools include Wendell Phillips, Gage Park, Orr High School, Douglass High School, Prosser Career Academy, Wells High School, James Jordan Boys & Girls Club, Clemente High School, Austin College and Career Academy, Chicago for students age 14-18 (residency lengths are either school year or summer).
 - Contact: Claire Meyers, 312-217-5404

Residencies With Youth – past:

- Djembe/dunun instructor for Parent University at [Spencer Technology Academy](#), Roberto [Clemente High School](#) and [Miles Davis Magnet School](#) all in Chicago, 2014-2017
 Contact: Ms Pamela Price 773-841-7097
- Conducted djembe class for African American Male Youth Initiative, through Boulevard Arts Center, resident at Sherman Park, Chicago, 2008-2011 with youth aged 6-15
 - Contact: Martha Jones, 773-639-8843
- Artist in Residence (Adventures in Music Teaching Artist, teaching djembe and dunun) with **Chicago Symphony Orchestra** 2009-2011 with youth aged 5-18.
 - Contact: Tania Van Bree, 312-294-3803
- Conducted djembe class **independently** for First Circle Education for Young Children (pre-school), Oak Park, 2007-2010, for youth age 3-5yrs
 - Contact: Haegyung K. Weisbrod, 708-848-9422
- Conducted djembe class via Steckman Studio of Music for Oak Park Dist 97 schools, Brooks and Julian Middle schools, 2006-2010 school year, for youth age 11-13yrs
 - Contact: Vicky Scaman, 708-524-1954
- Conducted djembe class for Chicago West Community Music Center, Garfield Park Fieldhouse, Chicago 2002 and 2003 for students age 8-12 and 14-16 respectively
 - Contact: Howard Sandifir, 708-386-5315
- Conducted djembe class for CHICAGO WALDORF SCHOOL, Chicago , 2000 for students age 13-18
 - Contact: Joe Bailey, 773-465-2662
- Music Director for CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT Kids Summer Camp program 1996 at Loyola Park location for youth age 5-12
 - Contact: Linda Kelso, 312/742-7921
- Volunteer Drum Education Program for Youth at EVANSTON YMCA 1995 for students age 4-11
 - Contact: David Blood, 708/328/1428

“Drum Therapy”/Healing work including work with At-Risk groups

➤ For Youth:

- ❖ Musical Director “HELLO Drum Chorus”, a drum ensemble composed of **homeless teens** via the Night Ministry, 1/2007-current.
 - Contact: Anne Holcomb, 773-699-4711
- ❖ Conduct rhythm interactive workshop/performances at Comer, Rush and Lurie Children’s Hospitals, Chicago, via the Old Town School of Folk Music, Chicago for **hospitalized** youth 1/2004-current
 - Contact: Jenna Murfin, 773.751.3326
- ❖ Conduct rhythm interactive workshop/performances at Ferst School, Chicago via the Old Town School of Folk Music for **physically and mentally challenged youth** 1/2004-current
 - Contact: Kate Walsh, 773-751-3337
- ❖ Conducted djembe session for House of the Good Shepherd, **Emergency Domestic Abuse shelter**, 2004-2008 via Merit School of Music for youth age 6-12
 - Contact: Logan Massey, 312-267-4477
- ❖ Conducted weekly drum therapy sessions at Paulina House (a Merriville Academy group home), 2002-2005, for **behavioral and developmentally delayed** boys, age 10-18
 - Contact: Dr. Harry Steckman, 708-524-1954
- ❖ Conducted monthly drum therapy session at Village Day School, beginning 2002 – 2005, working with **developmentally and behaviorally delayed** boys aged 5-12
 - Contact: Mike Lazarus, 708-660-1821

➤ For Adults:

- ❖ Created and conduct [DRUMEDITATION™](#) – a combination of intentional drumming, breath work and guided meditation designed for healing
- ❖ ‘TRANSMEDITATIONAL DRUMMER’ for lecture/workshops “CREATING A MORE HOLISTIC LIFE -- HOW RITUAL ENHANCES THE MIND/BODY/SPIRIT CONNECTION” AND “IDENTIFYING AND INTEGRATING THE CHAKRA SYSTEM INTO YOUR DAILY LIFE” – created by Kurt Hill (Holistic Healthcare Practitioner) 312-664-8376
- ❖ Conducted monthly drum therapy session at Westlake Hospital – Behavioral Health Unit, working with the **psychiatrically impaired**
 - Contact: Amber Kanopa, 708-938-7279
- ❖ Live drummer for workshop ‘DARE TO LIVE YOUR DREAM’, created by Susan Day, ICF (Life Coach) 312-464-1188

Certification and Training

- *[TAM MANDINGUE DJEMBE ACADEMY](#) CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR 2005
- *[TAM TAM MANDINGUE DJEMBE ACADEMY](#) SENIOR CERTIFIED INSTRUCTOR (first in the world to receive this highest degree offered by the Tam Tam Mandingue Djembe Academy, Intl) June, 2006
- Studied drumming, dance, West African culture and history at Master Drummer [Mamady Keita's](#) and [M'Bemba Bangoura's](#) workshops in Guinea, West Africa 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2005 and 2007
- Drum Teachers include: [Mamady Keita](#), [Bolokada Conde](#), [Famoudou Konaté](#), [Michael Markus](#), [M'Bemba Bangoura](#), [Yaya Kabo](#), [Madou Dembele](#), Gbanworo Keita, Laurent Camara, Minto Camara, [Arthur Hull](#) (drum circle facilitation), [Yaya Diallo](#), and Jahamen Mobley

Miscellaneous:

- **Tam Tam Mandingue Djembe Academy Instructor and Senior Instructor are degrees in the djembe (and dunun) drum offered exclusively by Mamady Keita, Grand Master Drummer from Guinea West Africa. This certification was born as part of the school Mamady established in Brussels, Belgium in 1992, called Tam Tam Mandingue. Tam Tam Mandingue currently has branch schools in North America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.*

Biographical Information for Michael J. Taylor,
Educator, Performer, Student, Entrepreneur, Composer, Recording Artist, Writer

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| General synopsis: | Whether it is as an educator, entrepreneur, video/recording artist or performer, Taylor brings a unique perspective to his craft. With the combination of a unique ability to communicate, instill discipline and promote creativity, combined with a broad range of life and professional experience, he focuses on the relationship between the individual and rhythm/drumming. This has led to an overall philosophy that seeks to bridge the gap between all things in rhythm, seeking to find where one's own personal pulse lies in relation to the collective pulse. By way of traditional West African or non-traditional styles, Taylor demonstrates the universality of rhythm in everything he does. |
| Teaching: | Taylor brings a unique perspective to his teachings. As a Tam Tam Mandingue Certified Professor , he teaches traditional West African rhythms as well as traditional djembe technique, rhythm exercises and listening skills. Students are encouraged to explore the far-reaching implications of learning rhythm on how they think, their level of personal confidence, how they feel and how they reason. The learning of rhythm can be a conduit to understanding the importance of independence/interdependence. Learning your part achieves independence; putting that part in the context of others' achieves interdependence. |
| Workshops: | In his workshop program 'Ordered Chaos', he expresses his reverence to the balance between order and chaos in a philosophical light; he shows the balance between order and chaos as that which binds and separates the universe - the entire universe is in rhythm. He demonstrates this balance through various rhythmic/arhythmic exercises along with exploring the importance of technique in finding ones individual voice on the drum. Additionally, in the second half of the program, he teaches a traditional West African djembe rhythm, so that participants get a taste of the traditional side of the type of drumming he specializes in. |
| Work with youth: | In his work with children, he has seen how drumming can enliven and educate on a number of different levels. Qualities like discipline, patience, focus and determination translate into reward, community and "positivity" when children drum. 'It is fascinating seeing kids understand what it is to <i>understand</i> on a deeper level than they are accustomed to', states Taylor, 'by this I mean not only understanding and mastering the pieces of the puzzle, the parts, but fitting them together, making one rhythm, one puzzle, where everyone has a role in the whole.' |
| Work special needs groups: | In his work with the mentally and physically challenged, he has seen how drumming can bring out the abilities of mentally and physically challenged adults and children. Percussion is such a primal thing; it's appeal is on a very deep level in the human psyche. 'I have seen communication/bonding [by way of percussion] on a level with the handicapped that most of them were not able to explore in any other mode of communication', quotes Taylor. |
| Performances: | In his performances Taylor strives to translate rhythm into a variety of contexts, both traditional and non-traditional. In the traditional and non-traditional form performing West African djembe rhythms with performance ensemble with HOLY GOAT ENSEMBLE, he has combined his djembe stylings with poetry, voice, acoustic combos and ensembles, full bands, traditional combos and ensembles, performance art, etc. He aspires to combine theatre with rhythm, including lighting, costuming, scripting, etc. |
| Recording/ Video: | Taylor's most recent DVD project is an instructional DVD, focused on the practice of djembe rhythms of the Mande, entitled, "Akaran Iko Iko (learn again, again)" ©2006. His first DVD project focused on traditional djembe technique, and is entitled "Remembering How To Drum" ©2003. These ground breaking DVDs utilize cutting-edge DVD technology in presenting what he thinks any serious student of the djembe needs to focus on. As a recording artist, Taylor uses traditional instrumentation to translate his rhythmic ideas onto a recordable medium. His third CD, "SILENCE IN THE RHYTHMIC SOUP – RHYTHMIC ENVIRONMENTS FOR YOGA AND MEDITATION" ©2003 was created for use with Yoga and meditation. His second CD, 'SILENCE' ©2001, is his first solo work which he composed, arranged, produced and recorded. His first compact disc 'A TOUCH OF CHAOS IN THE RHYTHMIC SOUP' ©1996 was a collaborative effort between Taylor and his long-time partner in creative-crime, writer, producer, engineer, teacher, performer, Christian Pawola. Taylor's media are available at many stores throughout the U.S.; check www.holygoat.com for stores and availability. |
| Writings: | Taylor authored the book " Remembering Your Ancestral Fire: A Bi-racial Man's Unlikely Journey of Self Discovery, Heeding the Call of the Djembe " in 2023. In his own words "...writing [Remembering Your Ancestral Fire] has been a way to make sense out of those things I cannot escape. It is the result of many years of experiences, sitting at the feet of African Masters, growing up bi-racial, finding/cultivating your purpose in life, trips around the world, sharing stories, composing "Africanesque" folktales, and making observations...it is definitely not just about the West African djembe drum." Taylor has also written several pieces, all in some way tied to the drum experience as metaphor for larger experiences that all humanity shares. His works have been commissioned by WBEZ (Chicago's NPR affiliate) Piece 1 on WBEZ , Piece 2 on WBEZ , for World Percussion Rhythm Magazine and appear on his website. |