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**Guest Artist Series**

**2016–2017 Season**

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Sara M. Snell Music Theater

Sunday, April 23, 7:30 PM

**West African Drum & Dance Ensemble**  
**Julie Hunter, director**  
**Martin Kwaku Kwaakye Obeng, guest artist**

Haa Mi Ayekoo (Traditional)

Agbadza Dance-Drumming (Traditional)

Kwadzo Ku

Agba Ee

Tu Tu Gbovi (Traditional)

Bobobo Dance-Drumming (Traditional)

Salam Malekum

Ma Yi Afe

Novi Lolo

James Millen II, trumpet

Recitation of Proverbs

Kpanlogo Dance-Drumming (Traditional)

ABC

Se O Se O Lele

Tsoo Boi

Haa Mi Ayekoo

Kawie Saka Saka

Engo N'na Ee

Soweto

Repertoire:

“**Haa Mi Ayekoo**” is a song set in the Ga language which is part of the Kpanlogo repertoire. The lyrics depict women teasing each other over their cooking skills in frying fish.

**Agbadza** is a type of Ewe war dance-drumming, which is typically performed in contemporary contexts at funerals. It first developed in the 1700s, and is the most common type of traditional music played today among the Ewe people of southeastern Ghana and southwestern Togo. The themes of songs touch on heroism, leadership, bravery, war, and death. The songs featured here discuss death. “Agba Ee” uses the metaphor of a plate that has gone missing to describe someone who has passed away, and “Kwadzo Ku” is about a Monday-born male who has died. The instrumentation includes the *gankogui* (iron double bell), *axatse* (gourd shaker), *toke* (boat-shaped bell), *kagan* (small stick drum), *kidi* (medium stick drum), and *sogo* (lead hand drum).

“**Tu Tu Gbovi**” is a popular traditional lullaby set in the Ewe language. It is often performed solo without accompaniment in people’s homes, although it has also been adapted to genres such as *bobobo*, *palmwine*, and *highlife*. The Crane West African Ensemble’s music majors are featured here.

**Bobobo**, the second dance-drumming piece of the night, is a type of recreational dance-drumming of the Ewe people in Southeastern Ghana. It originated in Kpando, located in the Northern Volta Region, prior to Ghanaian independence in the late 1950s. Influences from West African *highlife*, for example the offbeat bell timeline, and Western hymn singing are evident. Most of the song lyrics in *Bobobo* are set in the Ewe language. While many Ewe genres include mixed-gender dancing, the typical gender roles of this genre include female dancers, and male drummers. Drumming is typically performed only by men in Ghana. A trumpet or bugle is commonly used to accompany the singing and improvise around the melodies of the songs. The instrumentation includes the *toke* (boat-shaped single bell), *kretsiwa* (iron finger bell), *akaye* (gourd shaker), *vuvi* (small stick drum), *asivui* (hand drum), *dondo* (double-sided hourglass-shaped talking drum), *vuga* (master drum).

**Recitation of Proverbs** During the semester students have been introduced to West African proverbs, which are often the basis for song texts, and will recite and discuss a number of Akan proverbs here.

**Kpanlogo**, the third dance-drumming piece of the night and last piece of the performance, is a type of Ga recreational music from the area around the capital city of Accra in southern Ghana typically played at funerals, festivals, and parties. It developed in the 1950s during Ghana's independence period. The song lyrics and dance movements embody the lifestyle of urban West African youth. The lead hand drum calls the dancers. Instrumentation includes *mi* (hand drums), *nonota* (double iron bell), *shekeshe* (gourd shaker), *dodompo* (small iron bell), and *tamalin* (frame drums), and wooden clappers. In West African performance contexts in places such as Ghana, Togo, and Nigeria, audiences often acknowledge the exceptional dancing and music abilities of skilled artists by handing them money or placing it on their foreheads as they perform. This practice is known as *dashing* or *spraying*. *The audience is encouraged to join us at the end for this dance, and clap and sing along, if so inspired!*

### ***Ensemble Performers***

Nana Abena Baffour Akoto  
Lauren Behan  
Sarah Burns  
Eric Coffey Jr.  
John Connor  
Madeline Coons  
Dicko Oumar  
Rachel Fay  
Diana Fitzwilliam  
Natalie Flanigan  
Brittany Geiler  
Dara Green  
Paulina Gyamerah  
Elisia Ivey  
Kady Konate  
Madeline Leppert  
Jacob Martin  
Erica Mensah  
James Millen II  
Talaya Murphy  
Chelsea Perticone  
Andry Rosario  
Giovanna Savoie  
Victoria Smith  
Awa Touray  
Sarahfina Wipf  
Charles Yarney  
Bonnie Zellner

*Additional Guests:*

Quiára Baker  
Louisa Carasco  
Brandon Griffin  
Lawrence Halsey  
Ruben Juarez

*Guest Artist Bio:*

**Martin Kwaku Kwaakye Obeng** has worked with the ensemble since its start in Spring 2013. He is a well-renowned drummer, composer, dancer, and educator originally from Ghana who has worked internationally for the past 30 years. He began drumming at the age of five, and by seventeen he was appointed Royal Court Drummer to the high chief of the Aburi-Akuapim region of the Eastern Region of Ghana. He was a member of Ghana's National Arts Council Folkloric Company. He has continued to perform traditional music of West Africa, in addition to highlife, jazz, Latin music, reggae, and different fusions of these styles. Obeng teaches at Brown University, and has shared the stage with such luminaries as Max Roach, Roy Hargrove, Randy Weston, Anthony Braxton, Gideon Alorwoyie, and Obo Addy. His most recent recording titled *Africa's Moving Forward* is available online at [www.kwakukwaakyeobeng.bandcamp.com](http://www.kwakukwaakyeobeng.bandcamp.com). To hear more of his music, and read about his work, please visit his website at [www.kwakukwaakyeobeng.org](http://www.kwakukwaakyeobeng.org), and follow him on facebook at [www.facebook.com/KwakuKwaakyeObeng/](http://www.facebook.com/KwakuKwaakyeObeng/).

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