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**Evening Concert Series**

**2016–2017 Season**

Sara M. Snell Music Theater

Sunday, November 20, 7:30 PM

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

Se O Se O Lele (Traditional)

Bell Improvisation

Kpegisu Songs (Traditional)

To Nku Deke

Kitia Dza

Gahu Dance-Drumming (Traditional)

Gahu Woe Loo

Se Adzo

Kinini Tana

Recitation of Proverbs

Kpanlogo Dance-Drumming (Traditional)

Se O Se O Lele

Kayime Maame Ee

Tso Boi

Baa Baa Shi Baa Baa

Calabash Song

***Special Thanks:***

Dean Michael Sitton

Martin Obeng

Brandon Griffin

Yoav Cohen

Rachel Fay

Quiára Baker

Marsha Baxter

Karen Miller

Sarah Burgess

Lorelei Murdie

Lonel Woods

Timothy Sullivan

Robert Vadas

Libbie Freed

Manavi Deku

Komivi Deku

Yaw Atiso

Peter McCoy

Klikor Kpegisu Women's Habobo

Music Theory/History/Composition Department

Music Performance Department

Brown University Department of Music

Jason Hunter, Linda and David Hunter

Repertoire:

**Se O Se O Lele** is a song set in the Ga language which is part of the Kpanlogo repertoire.

**Bell Improvisation** – In this piece, students will play typical Ewe interlocking rhythms that form the basis of the popular traditional music genre Agbadza, while several students perform improvisations over them.

**Kpegisu** is a type of Ewe war dance-drumming. It first developed in the 1700s, and is typically reserved for special events such as annual harvest festivals, regional and national arts festivals, or the installation of a chief. The songs touch on themes of war, heroism, bravery and death. One of the songs featured here, “To Nku Deke”, translates as “One-Eyed Buffalo” and incorporates a proverb to describe the difficulties that are faced in life (war). The second song, “Kitia Dza”, has a meaningless text which imitates the sound of the drum language played by the lead stick drum, *kloboto*. These songs were importantly taught to ethnomusicologist Julie Hunter during fieldwork in Ghana, and her work with female musicians in the Klikor Kpegisu Habobo, a unique all-women’s dance-drumming association in which women perform instruments and repertoire typically reserved for men. The instrumentation for this particular song arrangement includes the *gankogui* (iron double bell) and *axatse* (gourd shaker).

**Gahu**, the fourth piece of the night, and first to feature dance, is a type of recreational dance-drumming of the Ewe people. Gahu originated as an Egun dance from Benin that was adopted by Ewe communities in Togo and Ghana in the early twentieth century. The music is typically played at special events such as religious and harvest festivals, or for the installation of a chief. It is a social dance that reflects modern living and sensibilities in contemporary Africa. Gahu means “money dance” which points to its showy and elaborate nature exemplified by the expensive and high quality costumes and accessories typically worn by performers. The lead drum, *gboba*, cues the dancers to change their movements. Instrumentation includes *gankogui* (iron double bell), *toke* (boat-shaped bell), *axatse* (gourd rattle), *sogo* (large stick drum), *kidi* (medium stick drum), *kagan* (small stick drum) and *gboba* (large lead 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 second 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!* One song text, set in English and Ga, is provided below.

### Calabash Song

Call:           Everybody  
Response:      Everybody  
C:              Bring your calabash (gourd bowl)  
R:              Bring your calabash  
R:              *Mofeamo*  
                  *Ke tse ne aba*  
                  *Woya woya nu koko.*  
C:              Everybody  
R:              Everybody  
C:              Bring your calabash  
R:              Bring your calabash  
R:              *Mofeamo*  
                  *Ke tse ne aba*  
                  *Woya woya nu koko.*

### *Translation:*

Everybody bring your calabash  
Let's go and eat cornmeal porridge.

### ***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/).

#### ***Ensemble Performers***

Yoav Cohen  
John Connor  
Tara Danforth  
Dorje Dolma  
Rachel Fay  
Jennifer Fernandez  
Maria Giufre  
Dara Green  
Brandon Griffin  
Torie Keeton  
Greg Larbi  
Kevin Larsen  
Lawrence Halsey  
Ruben Juarez  
Ben Kennedy  
Jonelle King  
Kiersten Skinner  
Victoria Smith  
Kingston St. Louis  
Emily Steckline  
Bonnie Zellner

#### ***Additional Guests***

Ebenezer Akuffo  
Quiára Baker  
Savannah Calhoun  
Louisa Carasco  
Keme Fofana  
Shanya Foster  
Justice Kennedy  
Adelmari Rodriguez