Evening Concert Series

2019–2020 Season

Sara M. Snell Music Theater  Saturday, November 23, 7:30 PM

West African Drum and Dance Ensemble

Julie Hunter, director

Martin Kwaku Kwaakye Obeng, guest instructor and artist

Akan Poem & Drumming  Traditional

- Asuo twa okwan
- Okwan twa asuo
- Opani ne hwan?
- Asuo twa okwan
- Okwan twa asuo
- Opani ne hwan?
- Yeboo kwan no katoo asuo no
- Asuo no firi tete
- Asuo no firi Odomankoma a oboo adee

- Konkon Tano
- Brefa Tano
- Asuo brekete
- Agya Kwaa Ata ei!
- Asu berempon
- Asuo twa asuo
- Takasi berempon
- Woama Bosompra adi afasee

- Me nam, me nam, me nam, ma si ta ko mu

Gahu Dance-Drumming  Traditional

- Se Adzo
- Gahu Woe Loo
- Kinini Tana

- Brefa Tano
- Asuo brekete
- Agya Kwaa Ata ei!
- Asu berempon
- Asuo twa asuo
- Takasi berempon
- Woama Bosompra adi afasee

- Brefa Tano
- Me nam, me nam, me nam, ma si ta ko mu

Pete Pete  Traditional

- Konkon Tano
- Brefa Tano
- Asuo brekete
- Agya Kwaa Ata ei!
- Asu berempon
- Asuo twa asuo
- Takasi berempon
- Woama Bosompra adi afasee

- Konkon Tano
- Me nam, me nam, me nam, ma si ta ko mu

Kpegisu Dance-Drumming  Traditional

- To Nku Deke
- Kiti Dza

- Frampon damirifa
- Damirifa
- Damirifa due
- Damirifa due
- Takasi berempon
- Frampon, damirifa
- Asu berempon
- Frampon damirifa
- Damirifa
- Damirifa
- Damirifa due
- Damirifa due
- Damirifa due, due, due.

- Frampon, condolence
- Condolence
- Condolence
- Deepest condolence
- Takasi the great
- Frampon, condolence
- Great river
- Condolence
- Condolence
- Deepest condolence
- Deepest, deepest, deepest

Kpanlogo Dance-Drumming  Traditional

- Womibae
- Ayelevi
- Kawie Saka Saka
- Soweto
- Osei Aye
- Tsoo Boi

- Takasi berempon
- Frampon damirifa
- Asu berempon
- Frampon damirifa
- Damirifa
- Damirifa
- Damirifa due
- Damirifa due
- Damirifa due, due, due.

- Frampon, condolence
- Condolence
- Condolence
- Deepest condolence
- Deepest, deepest, deepest condolences.

Poetry Honoring the River Tano

Asuo twa okwan
The river crosses the path

Okwan twa asuo
The path crosses the river

Opani ne hwan?
Which is the elder?

Asuo twa okwan
The river crosses the path

Okwan twa asuo
The path crosses the river

Opani ne hwan?
Which is the elder?

Yeboo kwan no katoo asuo no
The path was cut to meet the river

Asuo no firi tete
The river is of old

Asuo no firi Odomankoma a oboo adee
“The Odomankoma” the creator

Konkon Tano
Konkon Tano

Brefa Tano
Brefa Tano

Asuo brekete
Asuo brekete

Agya Kwaa Ata ei!
Father Kwaa Ata ei!

Asu berempon
The great river

Asuo twa asuo
River that passes a river

Takasi berempon
Takasi the Great

Woama Bosompra adi afasee
You have caused Bosompra to eat the water yam

Me nam, me nam, me nam, ma si ta ko mu
I have wandered, and wandered, and wandered, I have stepped into the deep floods of Ta

Takasi berempon
Takasi the great

Frampon damirifa
Frampon, condolence

Damirifa
Condolence

Damirifa
Condolence

Damirifa due
Deepest condolence

Damirifa due
Deepest condolence

Takasi berempon
Takasi the great

Frampon, damirifa
Frampon, condolence

Asu berempon
Great river

Frampon damirifa
Frampon, condolence

Damirifa
Condolence

Damirifa
Condolence

Damirifa due
Deepest condolence

Damirifa due
Deepest condolence

Damirifa due, due, due.
Deepest, deepest, deepest condolences.
Gahu is an Egun dance from Benin that was adopted by Ewe communities in Togo and Ghana in the mid-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. The lead drum, ghoba, 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 ghoba (large lead drum).

Pete Pete is one of the most popular Akan children’s songs. “Pete” means “vulture” in Akan, which is used as a metaphor to describe a child’s large appetite. The lyrics include a list of foods in order to get a child’s attention and let him/her know it’s time for dinner, such as fufu (cooked and pounded yam, cassava, and/or plantain), and abenkwam (palm nut soup). Guest artist Martin Kwaku Kwaakye Obeng released a version of this song on his album titled Sun Sum which can be accessed here: https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/kwakukwaakyeobeng.

Kpegisu represents a type of Ewe war dance-drumming. It first developed in the 1800s, 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. The song “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. This musical genre was 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 Kpegisu including gankogui (iron double bell), axatse (gourd shaker), sogo (large hand drum), kidi (medium stick drum), kagan (small stick drum), and kloboto (master stick drum).

Kpanlogo is the third dance-drumming piece of the night and last piece of the performance. It is a type of Ga recreational genre from the capital city region of Accra in southern Ghana. It is 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), 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 clap and sing along, if so inspired!

Ensemble Performers:
Justice Akwei
Rainar Anderson
Victoria Awogbemi
Isabelle Bailey
Zachary Castro
Melissa Dolese
Kenny Doubouyou
Paul Dougall
Darius Fuller

Molly Guarton
Anise Hetman
Jacob Hetman
Joseph Janover
Katya Lyubomirsky
Alanna Pinard-Brace
Rishi Ramsingh
Andrew Richardson
Clayton Williams

Additional Guests:
Nana Abena Baffour Akoto
Tokunbo Allen Bakare
Fauzia Ghatta
Brandon Griffin
Peter McCoy

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 fuses 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. To hear more of his music, and read about his work, please visit his website at www.kwakukwaakyeobeng.org, and follow him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/KwakuKwaakyeObeng/.

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