



College of Music  
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

# MSU African Diaspora Percussion Ensemble

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Kevin Jones, director  
Angel Hernandez, assistant director  
Catherine Lee, assistant director

The Rootead Youth Dance Ensemble  
Heather Mitchell and Kama Mitchell, directors

Friday, April 19, 2024  
Murray Hall, 8:00 p.m.

# PROGRAM

## **Rhythms and Songs from Congo**

Yembala - Zebola Traditional Spiritual Dance  
arr. Titos Somba

Aire Pinoeré Traditional Rhythm of Conga

Ganza arr. Titos Somba

## **Rhythms and Songs from Cuba**

Bembé Sacred Rhythm & Dance

Matanzas Rumba Guaguancó Traditional Cuban Rhythm

Congo Yambumba Jesús Alfonso Miró  
(1948–2009)

Rumba Columbia Traditional Cuban Rhythm

## **Djembe Orchestra**

Baku Mani – Intro Traditional West African Rhythm  
arr. Babatunde Lea

Sunu Traditional Rhythm from Mali  
arr. Mamady Keïta  
The Rootead Youth Dance Ensemble

Niger Traditional  
arr. Les Percussions de Guinée

Lamban Traditional Rhythm from Djeli  
The Rootead Youth Dance Ensemble

Zaouli and Kuku Original Dance from Coté d'Ivoire  
arr. Mamady Keita and Djobi Irie Simon  
The Rootead Youth Dance Ensemble

# PROGRAM NOTES

## I. Rhythms and Songs from Congo

Music from the Kongo Kingdom has influenced music all over the world. Their musical culture features their main traditional instrument, the Ngoma. Traditionally, the Congolese people have many different types of instruments, but the Ngoma remains their most culturally significant instrument.

**Yembala** - arranged by Titos Somba (born, unknown - present) Brazzaville, Congo. - A song and arrangement utilized for villagers to bless hunters' safety and success. The rhythm is a traditional rhythm called **Zebola**.

**Aire Pionéré** - A traditional celebration rhythm played in both Congo Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) and Congo Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of Congo).

**Ganza** - Titos Somba

Ganza is a traditional rhythm, dance, and song to celebrate the rite of passage for young boys to become men.

## II. Rhythms and Songs from Cuba

**Bembé** - Bembé comes from the Yoruba people of West Africa. Depending on the context, the term "bembé" can refer to one of many things. However, for our purposes it is a specific rhythm played on congas and a dance that is sacred in nature. A Bembé is also a ceremony honoring the orishas in the Lucumi traditions derived from the Yoruba people.

**Matanzas Rumba Guaguancó** - Rumba is a group of rhythms that have their origins in Africa particularly Congo and West Africa. Matanzas Rumba Guaguanco is traditional Rhythm from Matanzas region of Cuba. The song will be **Congo Yambumba** by Jesús Alfonso Miró (1948 - 2009) who was one of the founders of the group "Los Muñequitos de Matanzas".

**Rumba Columbia** - Traditional Rhythm and Dance from Cuba. Created by dock workers in Cuba, it was traditionally danced by only men to show off their skill and machismo.

# PROGRAM NOTES

## III. Djembe Orchestra

Djembe drumming has been around for centuries, originating in the Mali Empire; now the West African countries of Guinea and Mali. In this region, the people played this percussive music for all daily life events for so long that eventually the music blended into the culture and traditions, and has remained so ever since. A Guinean traditional orchestra is composed of eight percussive instruments or more, the djembe being one of them. The base drums of the orchestra are called dundunba drums. Each instrument of the orchestra plays a different percussive pattern.

**Baku Mani – Intro** – A traditional West African Rhythm played and taught by Babatunde Lea.

### **Sunu – featuring The Rootead Youth Dance Ensemble**

A traditional rhythm from Mali arranged by Mamady Keïta, Sunu(n) is a popular rhythm played at all popular festivities. Originally named after a female dancer named Sunun, the rhythm has grown many variations over the years and most of the songs are about weddings or marriage.

**Niger** – arranged by Les Percussions de Guinée – Niger is a soulful, happy rhythm used for dancing and fun times. It is named after a street in Conakry: Route Du Niger. Featured soloists will be various students.

**Lamban** - with solos from The Rootead Youth Dance Ensemble  
The Lamban dance is a dance performed by the griots called Djeli, the story tellers in African communities. The steps come from the founder of the Mali Empire, Sunjata Keita, also known as the Lion King, and have been passed down from generation to generation in griot families. It was performed for griots and for people who are supportive and giving to the community. This traditional dance originated in ancient Mali with the Bambara-Mandingo peoples.

### **Zaouli and Kuku – arranged by Mamady Keïta & Djobi Irie Simon Featuring Solos from The Rootead Youth Dance Ensemble**

Zaouli is a mask dance originating from the Gouro people from Coté d'Ivoire. Each village and family has their own mask and typically the movements of the dancers are coordinated with the drummers. In modern times and with the advent of ballet, Zaouli is often paired with Guinean rhythm Kassa (Harvest Dance) or Kuku, a celebration rhythm known as the “fishing dance”.

## ARTIST-FACULTY BIO

Percussionist, bandleader, producer, and educator “**Bujo**” **Kevin Jones** has played percussion for 54 years. Growing up in Englewood, New Jersey, he was immersed in jazz, soul, gospel, and blues, but was drawn to the sound of the drum and African Diaspora Cultures. Surrounded by excellent teachers like Master Drummers Karl Potter and Babatunde Lea, he was touring by age thirteen with “Spoonbread”, a soul group opening for acts like The Four Tops, War, and The Chi-Lites. At the age of sixteen, Jones joined Tanawa, a Drum and Dance Company under the leadership of Congolese Master Drummers and Dancers Titos Sompá, Coster Massamba, and Malonga Casquelourde. He studied with Max Roach and Archie Shepp at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His studies and playing led him to a number of disparate stages, including years of touring and recording with The Isley Brothers, Whitney Houston, and jazz greats Archie Shepp, Reggie Workman, Winard Harper, Charles McPherson, John Benitez, and Hilton Ruiz. An eternal student of the drum, Jones continued his study of multiple African Diaspora musics with Djobi Irie Simon (Ivory Coast), Mbemba Bangoura (Guinea), as well as Afro-Caribbean music with Luisito Quintero. Jones currently resides in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and has been teaching African Diaspora World Percussion to students at MSU for three years.

## ENSEMBLE BIO

**Rootead** is a nonprofit organization founded by Kama Mitchell that centers the lived experiences of BIPOC by providing connection and support through birth justice, youth empowerment, and community healing. Based in Kalamazoo, Rootead offers a variety of services including Yoga, Movement, Healing Circles, Expressive and Thematic Art, Embodied Wellness Facilitators, Youth Enrichment, West African Drum and Dance Instruction, and performances from Rootead Youth Drum and Dance as well as from elders in the community. Their moto is: Reclaiming the village through cultural liberation by holding space for internal transformation, birth justice, and healing arts. For more information visit [www.rootead.org](http://www.rootead.org).

# **PERSONNEL**

## **African Diaspora Percussion Ensemble**

Kevin Jones - director  
Angel Hernandez - assistant director  
Catherine Lee - assistant director  
Evan Moore  
Peyton Stramel  
Wyatt Harris  
Samuel Avendano  
Ethan Strickland  
Adrienne Evans  
Spencer Gravel  
Amaia Durham  
Ben Lober  
Mackenzie Edick

## **Rootead Youth Dance Ensemble**

Maya Fonseca-Jersild  
Charlii Thomas  
TiYanna Haines-Ward  
Gabrielle Mays-Vanloo  
Elexa Moore  
Kama Tai Mitchell

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- **Anonymous Donor Family** (Holiday Cheer)
- **John and Ethel Anthony** (Votapek and Friends, Sept. 18)
- **Sam and Mary Austin** (Musique 21 concerts)
- **Sam and Mary Austin Fund for New Music** (Kaia String Quartet, Wind Symphony, Oct. 27 and Symphony Orchestra, Oct. 29)
- **Ken and Sandy Beall** (Cello Plus Chamber Music Festival Series and Jazz Spectacular)
- **James and Susan Bonfiglio** (Red Cedar Organ, Sept. 17 and Spring Opera)
- **Jenny Chung and Family for Human Rights Fund** (Jazz Nonets, Nov. 17, Feb. 9 and Apr. 11)
- **Joanne and Bill Church (West Circle Series)**
- **April Clobes and Glen Brough** (Rachmaninoff at 150)
- **Dean Transportation** (Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Trustee Emerita Dee Cook in memory of her husband Byron Cook** (Celebrating Jewish Identity in Music)
- **Susan Davis** (Spring Opera)
- **Double E Family** (Marc Embree, Oct. 1)
- **John and Gretchen Forsyth** (Woodwind Trio, Sept. 6 and Flute and Piano, Jan. 25)
- **Thea Glicksman** (Trio Cantilena, Nov. 5)
- **Dr. Charles Gliozzo in memory of Marjorie Gliozzo**, This sponsorship honors Marjorie Gliozzo, a beloved teacher who taught Spanish, English, and ESL. She was a passionate traveler and leader in cultural exchange programs, with a deep appreciation for Spanish language and history. (MSU Symphony Orchestra, Oct. 29)
- **Howard and Pam Gourwitz** (Saxophone and Piano, Nov. 6 and Jazz Works, Jan. 12)
- **Belle S. Harris and Julius N. Harris Endowed Distinguished Visiting Artists Fund in the College of Music** (Leo Spellman, Oct. 14 & 15 and Trio Cantilena, Nov. 5)
- **Stanley and Selma Hollander Endowment for Chamber Music** (Trio Cantilena, Nov. 5)
- **Eileen G. Houston** (Lindberg and Pöntinen, Jan. 24)
- **Taylor Johnston Early Music Series Endowment established by Taylor Johnston** (Taylor Johnston Early Music Series)
- **Hari Kern and the late Ralph R. Edminster, M.D.** (Ralph Votapek, Mar. 21)

- **Michael and Paula Koppisch** (The Music of Water: Power and Beauty, Nov. 13)
- **Robert Last and Jill Canny** (MSU and Temple University Jazz Concert, Feb. 25)
- **Eleanor H. and Harold E. Leichenko Opera Endowment established by Lauren Julius Harris** (Fall and Spring Opera)
- **Ann, John and Abby Lindley** (Holiday Cheer, Happy Birthday Mozart!, and Percussion Ensemble, Mar. 27)
- **Merritt Lutz** (Jazz: Spirituals, Prayer and Protest Concert; Celebrating the Spectrum; and Wind Symphony, Mar. 17)
- **Clare Mackey** (Piano Monster)
- **Joseph and Jeanne Maguire** (A Jazzy Little Christmas)
- **Pat & Mary McPharlin** (Musique 21, Oct. 30 and Jazz: Spirituals, Prayer and Protest Concert)
- **Dr. Roy and Christine Meland** (Puccini: Con Amore)
- **Gordon E. Miracle** (Friends and Family, Feb. 18)
- **MSU Federal Credit Union** (Showcase Series, Spartan Spectacular, and Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **MSU Federal Credit Union Entrepreneurial Musical Artist-in-Residence Endowed Fund** (NOW Ensemble and Kaia String Quartet)
- **Liz and Tony Raduazo in honor of Andrew Raduazo** (Sensory Friendly Spartan Concert, April 16)
- **Nancy and Charlie Seebeck** (Votapek and Friends, Sept. 18 and Happy Birthday, Bach!, Apr. 12)
- **Michael and Elaine Serling Institute for Jewish Studies and Modern Israel** (Leo Spellman, Oct 14 & 15)
- **Leonard and Sharon Tabaka** (Annual Jazz Spectacular Finale Concert)
- **TechSmith** (Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Dr. Robert W. Uphaus and Dr. Lois M. Rosen** (DSO String Quartet, Oct. 10; MSU Chamber Trio, Oct. 12; Dmitri Berlinsky, Nov. 30; Violin and Organ Recital, Mar. 13; and Happy Birthday, Bach!, Apr. 12)
- **Linn Van Dyne and Mike Knox** (Symphony Orchestra, Dec. 1)
- **Barbara E. Wagner** (Wagner Chamber Music Competition)
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