

Aofs 3: Rhythms Of The World (Core Content)

African Drumming

Context

- Africa is a huge continent, with a rich and diverse history
- It has produced many strong musical traditions, both instrumental and vocal
- The music we are focusing on from the tradition of Sub-Saharan Africa



Continent Of Africa

Green = Sub-Saharan Africa

Music is performed every day in some African cultures; celebration funerals everyday tasks etc.

What is African Drumming?

Percussive music sometimes with additional vocals.
• Sounds and rhythms of African drumming are like a language that carries across both time & place

Who Is The Master Drummer?

Virtuoso performer - lead performer making calls
improvise rhythms + have solo moments in performance.

Key Musical Features of African Drumming

• Melody

- repetition of rhythms through call & response
- No clear pitch melody - percussive

• Tonality

limited tonality or harmony - percussion based

• Structure

Controlled by master drummer. Tutti sections / patterns
vs solo moments

• Instruments/Timbre

Talking drum, djembe, dundun

• Texture

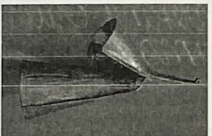
lots of layering, often complex
polyrhythms call + response
Bells, rattles shakers used.
Ostinato (repeated rhythmic patterns)

• Tempo/Metre/Rhythm

Strong pulse, fast tempo, polyrhythms. Triple rhythms
Cross rhythms.

Example artist/group Master Drummers of Dagblon

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	<u>Djembe</u> - single headed drum played with hands. Bass – strike centre of drum Tone – strike halfway between centre and edge Slap – short strike at the edge	
	<u>Dun Dun</u> • small, medium & large sizes • Double headed drums • played with sticks • can be played open or muted usually	can produce multiple sounds
	<u>Shakere</u> • made from a dried gourd covered with loose beads • Can be hit like a drum	has a bell attached
	<u>Talking drum</u> • squeezing strings changes the pitch of the drum. • Played to sound like local language and speech rhythms.	cuts across lower drums easily
	<u>Agogo</u> metal. • Will continue to ring out unless the sound is dampened.	loud piercing sounds

often hit with wooden stick
can bells attached to cattle which play if they are in danger

Use of Texture	
Improvisation	• Making it up during a performance
Call & Response	Question + answer
Layering	Gradual build up of parts

Use of Rhythm	
Improvisation	
Ostinato	repeated musical phrase or rhythm
Polyrhythm	many different rhythms played simultaneously
Cross Rhythm	2v3
Call & Response	