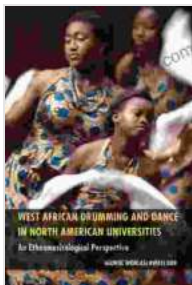


Unveiling the Rhythmic Heritage: West African Drumming and Dance in North American Universities

Abstract

This article explores the vibrant presence of West African drumming and dance in North American universities, showcasing the growing recognition and incorporation of these traditional art forms into higher education.

West African drumming and dance have captivated the hearts and minds of people worldwide. These rhythmic traditions, deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of the African diaspora, are now finding a home within the hallowed halls of North American universities.



West African Drumming and Dance in North American Universities: An Ethnomusicological Perspective

by George Worlasi Kwasi Dor

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
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Print length : 314 pages

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Historical Roots and Significance

The roots of West African drumming and dance can be traced back centuries, serving as vital forms of communication, spiritual expression, and social cohesion. Through rhythms and movements, these traditions embody the resilience and creativity of the African diaspora.

Emergence in Academia

The incorporation of West African drumming and dance in North American universities began in the mid-20th century as part of the growing field of ethnomusicology.

Pioneers such as John Miller Chernoff and Kofi Agawu introduced these traditions into university curricula, fostering a greater understanding and appreciation of their cultural significance.

University Programs and Ensembles

Today, numerous universities offer specialized programs in West African drumming and dance.

- **Indiana University:** African Music and Dance Program
- **University of California, Los Angeles:** Ethnomusicology Program with a focus on West Africa
- **Harvard University:** The African Studies Program

Moreover, many universities have established vibrant percussion ensembles that specialize in West African rhythms.

- **University of Michigan:** African Drumming and Dance Ensemble
- **Yale University:** Yale Polyrythmics

- **Northwestern University:** Northwestern African Drumming Ensemble

Benefits for Students

The study of West African drumming and dance offers students a myriad of benefits, including:

- **Cross-Cultural Understanding:** Deepening understanding of African cultures and the interconnectedness of human expression.
- **Musical Proficiency:** Developing technical skills in drumming and dance, enhancing rhythm and coordination.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Contributing to the preservation and transmission of these endangered traditions.
- **Personal Growth:** Fostering self-discipline, teamwork, and cultural sensitivity.

Research and Publications

In addition to teaching, universities are also centers of research and scholarship in West African drumming and dance.

Scholars such as Jacqueline Cogdell DjeDje, David Locke, and Andrew Tucker publish groundbreaking studies, fueling academic discourse and broadening our understanding of these traditions.

Community Outreach and Engagement

North American universities are not isolated from the surrounding communities.

They play a vital role in sharing West African drumming and dance with the broader public. Outreach programs, workshops, and performances engage students, faculty, and community members, fostering intercultural exchange and cultural appreciation.

The integration of West African drumming and dance into North American universities is a testament to the transformative power of these traditions.

Through academic programs, ensembles, research, and outreach initiatives, universities are not only preserving African cultural heritage but also shaping the future of these vibrant art forms.

As the rhythmic legacy of West Africa continues to resonate within the halls of academia, it serves as a testament to the indomitable spirit and cultural richness that have traversed oceans and time.



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