



College of Music
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

MSU African Diaspora Percussion Ensemble

Kevin Jones, director
Angel Hernandez, assistant director

Thursday, November 6, 2025
Fairchild Theatre, 7:30 p.m.

PROGRAM

Rhythms and Songs from Congo

Yembala	Titos Somba
Aire Pinoéré	Traditional
Nzobi	Traditional arr. Kevin Jones
Nkwanga	Traditional
Ganza	Titos Somba
Ngoma Ba Congo	Traditional

Intermission

Rhythms and Songs from Cuba

Matanzas Rumba Guaguancó	Traditional Cuban Rhythm
Congo Yambumba	Jesús Alfonso Miró (1948–2009)
Rumba Columbia	Traditional Cuban Rhythm
Mozambique	Traditional Cuban Music
La Conga	Traditional Cuban Rhythm

PROGRAM NOTES

Yembala, by composer and arranger Titos Sompa (born, unknown, in Brazzaville, Congo), is a song and arrangement utilized for villagers to bless hunters' safety and success. The rhythm is a traditional rhythm called **Zebola**.

Aire Pionéré is a traditional celebration rhythm that was played all over the Kongo Kingdom. This rhythm can be heard in such celebrations as marriage, harvest, and other celebrations in the community.

Nzobi – A traditional rhythm from Congo Brazzaville (Republic of Congo). This rhythm is from the northern region of this country and used to revive spiritual energy. It is said that if you have a problem or ailment, be it physical, mental or emotional, this is when those gathered would play and dance this rhythm.

Nkwanga – Origin unknown – A song for the happiness of children.

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

Ngoma Ba Congo – Traditional rhythm of the Ba Congo People. Ngoma Ba Congo literally means “Drums or Rhythm of the Ba Congo People”. It is played all over various parts of both Congos (Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo). Very much like the rhythm, Aire Pionéré. Ngoma Ba Congo is a secular Dance and Rhythm.

Matanzas Rumba Guaguancó is a group of rhythms that have their origins in Africa, particularly Congo and West Africa. Matanzas Rumba Guaguancó is traditional rhythm from the Matanzas region of Cuba. The song **Congo Yambumba** is based in these rhythms and composed by Jesús Alfonso Miró, one of the founders of the group “Los Muñequitos de Matanzas”.

Rumba Columbia is a 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

Mozambiqué – The "Mozambique" rhythm is a style of Cuban music and dance that was invented by Pello El Afrokan (Pedro Izquierdo) in 1963 and is derived from Cuban street carnival music, featuring conga drums, bombos (bass drums), cowbells, and various brass instruments. The Mozambique rhythm, like the conga, originated from the music of Cuban street carnivals or comparsas.

La Conga is a Cuban rhythm and dance characterized by staccato rhythms played on various conga drums, bombos, and cowbells in which dancers and musicians form a line and move in a snake-like fashion, often during carnivals or street parades. These musicians and dancers developed Cuban conga music from rhythmic street parade performances by groups called comparsas and its origins are from the eastern Cuban city of Santiago de Cuba.

ARTIST-FACULTY BIO

Percussionist, bandleader, producer and educator **“Bujo” Kevin Jones** has played percussion for 56 years. Growing up in Englewood, New Jersey, he was immersed in jazz, soul, gospel and blues. 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 Somba, Coster Massamba, and Malonga Casquelourde. He studied with Max Roach and Archie Shepp at UMASS 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 continues his study of multiple African Diaspora musics with Djobi Irie Simon (Ivory Coast) and M'bemba 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 five years.

STUDENT BIO

Angel J. Hernandez is a percussionist specializing in Afro-Cuban music. He is currently pursuing his D.M.A. degree in Percussion Performance at Michigan State University under the direction of Dr. Jon Weber, Professor Gwendolyn Dease, and Professor Kevin-Dalton Jones. Angel has performed with various groups such as the MSU Wind Symphony, MSU Salsa Verde, Orquesta Ritmo, MSU Drumline, MSU African Diaspora Ensemble, LanSINGout Men's Chorus, and more. Angel is currently the assistant director of the African Diaspora Ensemble at MSU. Angel is active in the Lansing, East Lansing, and Grand Rapids areas.

PERSONNEL

African Diaspora Percussion Ensemble

Angel Hernandez – assistant director

Catherine Lee

Zander Swon

Deegan Hutting

Mackenzie Edick

Cadence Miller

Kayla Mears

Peter Nonaka

Isaac Hinshaw

Ben Lober

Special Guests

Mike Eyia

Sarah Whitaker

Max Gage

Charlie Snyder

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- **Anonymous** (Rucker, Feb. 15)
- **Howard and Pam Gourwitz** (Lulloff, Oct. 30)
- **Kevin and Amy Guskiewicz** (Alegría Navideña)
- **Hamilton-Dodson African Diaspora Endowment for the College of Music** (Musekiwa Chingodza, Oct. 2)
- **Lauren Harris** (Symphonic Dialogues; Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Anne Hiller** (Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Stanley and Selma Hollander Endowment for Chamber Music** (Gems for Cello)
- **Eileen G. Houston** (Wagner/Johnson/Wang, Sept. 19; Thompkins/Dease/Tang, Oct. 14; Trombone Ensemble, Nov. 8; Kanda, Nov. 18; Tuba/Euphonium, Jan. 28; Huiet, Feb. 24)
- **Taylor Johnston Early Music Series Endowment established by Taylor Johnston** (Taylor Johnston Early Music Series)
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- **Lansing Chapter of the American Guild of Organists** (Organist Nicole Keller, Sept. 14; Organist Peter Sykes, Mar. 22)
- **Jill Canny and Robert Last** (MSU Federal Credit Union Jazz Artist in Residence, A. Cohen, April 18; Jazz Spectacular Finale Concert)
- **Eleanor H. and Harold E. Leichenko Opera Endowment established by Lauren Julius Harris** (Fall and Spring Opera)

- **Ann, John and Abby Lindley** (Alegría Navideña)
- **Merritt Lutz** (Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Joseph and Jeanne Maguire** (A Jazzy Little Christmas)
- **Marshall Music Co.** (Symphonic Dialogues)
- **Pat and Mary McPharlin** (Jazz Infusion; Jazz: Spirituals Prayer and Protest)
- **Friends of Jay D. Meetz** (Fall Opera)
- **Dr. Roy and Christine Meland** (Four Seasons)
- **Gordon E. Miracle** (Four Seasons; Votapek, Mar. 23)
- **MSU Federal Credit Union** (Showcase Series; Spartan Spectacular; Celebrating the Spectrum; MSU Music on The Road in Detroit)
- **George Urban and Rae Ramsdell** (Jang/Moriarty, Feb. 8)
- **Liz and Tony Raduazo** (Pass a Good Time, Oct. 5; Sensory Friendly Spartan Concerts)
- **Charles and Nancy Seebeck** (Bagratuni, Mar. 16)
- **Leonard and Sharon Tabaka** (Jazz Spectacular Finale Concert)
- **TechSmith** (Celebrating the Spectrum)
- **Dr. Robert W. Uphaus and Dr. Lois M. Rosen** (Symphonic Dialogues; Four Seasons; Beethoven; Happy Birthday Mozart!; Yehuda/Warren, Jan. 29; Bagratuni, Mar. 16; and Bagratuni, Mar. 31)
- **Linn Van Dyne and Mike Knox** (Happy Birthday Mozart!)
- **Barbara E. Wagner** (Wagner Chamber Music Competition)
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