

BEMBÉ

**A musical journey.
Starting in Tokyo,
taking me to Havana.
Searching for music
in CD shops in Vienna.**

**A journey well traveled
by HANS FLEISCHNER**

Foreword.

***A few words I may add here.
The musical journey really
started summer 1968 in
New York. Flushing, Queens,
to be precise. I stayed in the
home of the sister of Gene,
my uncle Ernst's wife. She
was away on holidays, so I
had the place to myself.
Upstairs her grandson had a
fine LP collection.
So the journey started here.***

***Big jump in time and
geography.***

***Tokyo and the release of
Bembé by Milton Cordona.***

***Now the focus became
Santería and the sacred
music and rituals practiced
across the Americas.***

***I wrote this text sometimes
after 2005. I remember
buying a book related to the
music in 2007.***

All soon 20 years ago.

***Will I, would I change the
text? No, unless I come
across a big error.***

*Read on and enjoy with me
the journey I took and at
least mentally always take.*

*You may know some or all
of the music I am talking
about here and I trust you
will hear some of it, as you
read this text.*

*Hans Fleischner
Vienna 2023, June.*

Bembé.

It started with Cream.

Thanks to Ginger Baker I started to really listen to drummers. Then I came across an album by Kip Hanrahan and Jack Bruce was one of the participating musicians, so I just bought it.

By doing so, I discovered Milton Cordona and one day there was the album called Bembé by him.

He went into the studio in N.Y. with drummers and singers and recorded the music known as Santeria.

I was hooked and a journey began, musically at first.

Santeria has a very long history, but right now and here, just a few words.

It starts in West Africa among the Yoruba people, was carried by many Africans to the Americas

and meant their spiritual survival and strength.

This music, a way of communicating with their Gods and if you look around everyones Gods, was adapted to the new environment, which saw the people not free, but as slaves.

This new reality, gave name to an ancient tradition and is called Santeria and the people calling and

praising their Gods do so in the language of the Yoruba.

If Gods have a home, they have found one in Havana.

We are not going there right away, wait, let me continue with my story.

But one thing I must say, before I go on, this spiritual music and the worship that goes along with it, can be found all across the Americas, under different names and played with different

drums and sung in different languages.

Bembé.

I continued looking.

My journey by now took me through music stores on several continents and I got deeper and closer to the Source.

Actually I was once before passing by the Source, so to speak, when I listened to an album called WE INSIST!

MAX ROACH'S- FREEDOM NOW SUITE.

One of the musicians on it was, Babatunde Olatunji, a drummer from Nigeria.

The album as a whole was an ear opener and also influenced my visual thinking, as music always does.

But back to the journey looking for the Source of Santeria.

Being in no hurry, having no master plan and doing it

*for the love of it, my next
discovery was, Spirit
Rhythms (Sacred Drum-
ming & Chants from Cuba)
by Orlando “Puntilla” Rios
& Nueva Generacion.*

*Another step, another turn
on the road to the Source.*

The Way of the Orishas:

*The Yoruba-Drums of Tri-
nidad, Part 1: Drums of
Worship, Part 2: Drums of
Pleasure.*

If I was a Music Ethnologist, at the latest here, I would start quoting from the liner notes, putting them into perspective to my own findings.

I'm not, I am a Photographer and a Lover of Music.

So I travel through the fields full of music, the way I walk through the streets full of people.

And who do I come across,

***MATANZAS, CUBA: Afro-
Cuban Sacred Music,
FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE
and HAVANA, CUBA:
Rhythms and Songs for the
ORISHAS.***

***Field recordings by Lydia
Cabrera and Josefina
Tarafa.***

***Exquisite, plenty of music
and lots of informations.***

***You are getting impatient,
wait, I know, but don't
worry, there will be plenty***

*of reference information
here and there, let me just
travel on.*

*Yoruba Drums from Benin,
West Africa.*

*Unlike in Nigeria, the mu-
sic here, remained largely
untouched by the changes
of modernization that
swept across West Africa.*

*Changes that created new
forms of music, which al-
ways had and still do draw
strength, from the way the*

knowledge of playing the drums, has been passed on from generation to generation of drummers.

VUDU. Yes.

VOODOO DRUMS

from Haiti.

CANDOMBLE from Brasil.

PONTOS DE MACUMBA

Chants religieux afro-brésiliens.

Santeria, Lucumi, Candomble, Macumba, Nago, Xango, Shango.

Haitian Vodou, Brazilian Candomble,

Cuban Santeria and Trinidadian Shango.

Orishas Across the Ocean.

From The Yoruba/Dahomean Collection

An Endangered Music Project.

Black Music in Praise of Oxala and Other Gods,

*from Colombia, Ecuador &
Brazil.*

*Diablos Songs and Drums
from Venezuela.*

*I know, as long as I can see
and hear, I will look and
listen and on this journey
with, through and because
of Santeria, you will find a
few good reasons why.*

*Havana was calling and my
friend Emilio knew I was
coming to town.*

By pure coincidence, if there is such a thing, I found a place to stay on Consulado and Emilio was living on Prado, just a block away, so very easy for me, to see him and say hello.

This was my first visit to Havana and I felt at home right away.

Hans, there is a group of musicians, that sing Son in German. Do you want to meet them. Sure.

*Rodriguez was a writer,
teacher and the organizer
of the band. I went to meet
them at the Humboldt In-
stitute.*

*On that very day, take note
please, a new member
joined the group, playing
the bongos.*

*I am Lazaro, my friends
call me Pipo.*

*Okay bongos, you can play
the hell out of them and
Cubans are masters at that,*

but I came to Havana, because of Santeria.

Lazaro, his dad and his brother play The Bata Drums, Congas, Chekere, they are a Percussion Family and practice Santeria, play all over the place and of course have many friends, who do the same.

Now I was in Havana.

I went to Cerro to visit Pipo. Everybody was there, I had met at Humboldt and

of course all his family members, coming and going and some friends from the neighborhood, too.

The party was on and with my little palm sized video camera and an external microphone I recorded the group singing Son in German, so I could show it to some people back in Europe.

Plus we did a little extra. Pipo on the Conga drum and his friend playing the

*guitar and then Pipo
singing and his brother
playing all three Bata
Drums bundled together,
giving me a taste of things
to come.*

Welcome to Santeria.

*Back downtown, I saw two
women in white, a sure sign
they are followers of Sante-
ria and they were.*

*Followed them with the
video camera, started talk-*

ing and arranged a meeting to photograph them.

One said she is a model and tonight she would show some new fashion at a well known restaurant near the bay. I'm not really a fan of restaurant fashion shows, so I waited for them to come to my place, where The Red Bag was waiting for them and I could take interesting pictures, that showed also something of Havana.

They came, one dressed in white and the other somebody else, dressed casually.

They were a mixture of arrogant and bored.

With The Red Bag and the stairs, the balcony and the room as background, there was something different.

Since this wasn't a fashion shooting, I could let things happen and come my way.

The pictures turned out just fine and I was happy with them.

Looking around I could always see women in white, wearing also very colorful necklaces and wristbands, made of beads.

I liked that and thought I might get some for myself.

So I checked with Pipo and he told me the meaning of them. In short, the colors were not a fashion state-

ment, but were chosen for you and showed to others your position in the world of Santeria.

I was still tempted to get some though, but then, since the minimum could be a misunderstanding and the maximum an insult to people practicing Santeria, I simply decided to enjoy the colors and the way the people wore them.

Ernst came to town and got a room at the Sevilla, right

*next to where Josephine
Baker once stayed.*

*Her room had the better
view of the city, so when he
invited me for breakfast,
we went up one more floor
to enjoy the best view ever.*

*The sun bathing the city in
warm morning light, many
hands waking up their
drums, to guide the gentle
souls through the city.*

*Santeria, Rumba, Salsa,
Son, whichever way you*

*start the day, when the
many hands go to sleep, the
drums gently send their
city to sleep.*

Havana, city of drums.

*Take away the drums and
the city is gone, the people
will stop and the hands will
go looking for their drums.*

*The feet will tell the hands,
if you don't find your
drums soon, we stop walk-
ing and the bodies, so many
stories to tell.*

*Pipo told us about a Sante-
ria party near his home, so
Ernst and I went there.*

*The place was packed, so
we stayed in the front
room.*

*The Batas were going and
my legs were going and I
almost forgot to take out
my little disk recorder, no
cameras please and then
there is this voice.*

*The voice has a name, Yer-
ilu and she got the place*

steaming. Suddenly she spotted me, my microphone smiling catching her wonderful voice.

She looked at me, like what are you doing here, did you ask, if no, eat your microphone and buy me some rum.

Well, of course she didn't stop singing, being in the middle of getting everybody, the drummers, the people up, up, up.

But during the break, she got a hold of Pipo. There is this guy with a microphone. He explained and everything was okay.

We were told of another party, outdoors, on the weekend, kind of a showcase for music and dance from Cuba.

Conjunto Folklórico Nacional de Cuba and Yerilu Lugo Valdespino was there.

Maybe she will never talk to me again, maybe I am just thin air for her, from now till forever, because now, first of all, I will tell you the story of a young man, maybe boy still.

The dancers and singers and drummers took a break, but there was still music and an elderly lady, everyone's grandma started to dance, she was sexy, she was elegant and she was funny and she invited

*this young guy, maybe
everyone's grandson to
dance with her.*

*He was good, very, very
good, very elegant, you just
know one day he will be
everyone's very elegant
granddad and the two
danced like only lovers can
and everybody loved it.*

*The tease was on and the
air was smiling sexy and
here comes this woman.*

This woman, I had noticed her before, was very attractive and you may argue, that the woman next to her had the higher cheekbones, but this woman came slowly down the steps, made her way through the audience and asked our man to dance.

How much you can bend your knees, she did it, how much you can show your butt, she did it and how

*much you can tease with
your shoulders, she did it.*

*And whatever else she did,
go and see it.*

*And our man, our every
man, hot damn, was so ele-
gant dancing with this
woman, whatever she did,
he knew the answer and
wasn't shy to ask her some
questions, too, which she
answered just fine.*

This elegance, this sensuality, this joy is the fabric of life in Havana.

It has helped the people to weather a lot of storms and they have been around for a good while doing that.

Most important though, through their music, their elegance and sensuality, they have given joy to a lot of people around the world. Did I forget dignity.

You may find it, right where you are standing, but because it is a rare currency at times and at some places, I want to point it out and say, among the many names dignity may have, one you find among the people of Santeria.

This is not about name dropping, this is not about raising one person above another. We are talking about life, of many, many people over hundreds and

thousands of years and their spirituality and it is only right, if one person comes along, who has learned from the ones before him and who passes on this knowledge to the ones after him.

One such person is Lazaro Ros. When I went into a CD store to ask for music regarding Santeria, when meeting the guy from upstairs in my apartment building, when talking to

the guys from Familia, a hip hop group, when talking to my friends, his name comes up.

I could have bought all the CDs there were and go home, but that's not why I came to Havana, right, right.

Another day I hooked up with Pipo at another Sante-ria party.

While I was waiting for him, the guys started to

play the introduction and I recorded that. Before it all really started, one young guy, the singer, told Pipo, that he didn't want to have his singing recorded, because he was told, somebody had heard his voice in Europe and he didn't know how it got there.

Okay, got the message, no problem, I was there, because of Pipo, so see you next time, really no problem and walked home.

Next time was it.

I went to Pipo's house.

*We are playing for some
guy, who throws a party.*

*No video, but you can
record us playing.*

*After quite some walk, we
get to the place. Not much
light, not too many people.*

Tuning of the drums.

*Introduction is being
played and I hear this
sound, I heard last time,*

during the playing of the introduction. Well same guy.

People slowly come from the neighborhood to join the party.

The guy with that different sound, was now the lead singer, what a voice. High, powerful and the drummers responding as chorus with low voices.

Slowly the party starts moving and now as if on a stage of an Afro, Afro, what

not Afro, traditional, modern, free, totally improvised Dance Performance starts happening.

The host, the guy living in the house, moves, I mean moves. He must have left his bones in the bedroom, because this was moves I saw, no bones moves.

I mean he was soloing, like he was playing the saxophone, every octave you can imagine and hear. Nobody can top that, you think.

You think, because now the neighbor, a buddy, a cousin, a brother, I don't know, starts his moves.

MOVES, written in Capital Letters. Am I missing something.

Was there a sign, that said, World Championship in Dry Ice Figure Dancing, because the place was smoking.

I gave them Both a Ten. A Gold Medal for them Both.

Guys you won, but now my eyes need a rest, so that they can see bones again, as in walking, running and sitting down.

Moves, man, moves, man.

Pipo walked with me to the main road, waited till I got a taxi and went back to the party. See ya, bones, moves man, moves, man, bones.

Good Morning.

*Coffee with two slices of
whole wheat toast and jam
and I am ready to go.*

*Sort of, but anyway awake
enough to write the name
of*

Merceditas Valdes.

She needs no introduction.

*All I can say, listening to
her, brings me, you, another
little step closer to San-
teria and Afro-Cuban mu-
sic.*

When looking, buying, listening to the music, I also catch the comment, file under: ethnic, folk, world, etc.

All maybe true, but one is missing, classic.

Only once to this day, did I find this word of paying respect, on an album by a French Artist.

He took the polyphonic songs of the Aka Pygmies and chose Western compositions inspired by them

and African Rhythms as such and recorded them back to back, paying tribute to the source of it all.

Taking their ancient way of communication as an inspiration, leaving their contribution, to our culture, in its original form.

So I dare and borrow this word classic, to express my respect to the musicians, their music, their culture, that we know in Cuba as Santeria.

*You go from there, you take
it from there, with respect.*

*I keep going, looking, find-
ing deep emotions, plea-
sure, chills down my spine
and yes, respect.*

*Sounds like Aretha Frank-
lin, well, here you got some
classic.*

Good Morning Again.

*Let me fly, jump and come
back, synthesize and listen
again to make sure,*

SINTESIS, Ancestros II

*On, from, through the
streets of Havana and be-
yond, keeping the ancient
roots growing, letting the
tree of Santeria stretch its
branches and twigs, to be
blessed by new, fresh, color-
ful, shining blossoms, like
the beads of the necklaces
and bracelets.*

*It's lunch by now and I will
have a little snack.*

*Toast, butter, tea with milk
and no siesta.*

***Hans, we are playing today.
Its near your apartment.***

***Santa Barbara, Chango and
I see a lot of red on my way
to the party.***

***Women, sorry, but I always
see the women first, Men,
Children coming and going.***

***The party, Pipo, his brother
Michel and friends are
playing for is special, most-
ly women were there.***

***I know what you are think-
ing, but I was busy with***

making some video, to add to my previous recordings.

Wooden boxes. Where are the drums. The wooden boxes where shaped like drums and gave off a very dynamic sound.

The drummers got their sounds, not only from playing them with their hands, but also by using short rhythm sticks and using them as jazz drummers do, when playing rimshots.

*That on wood, the singer
with a strong voice and
everybody moving.*

*Women falling, throwing
themselves at the drum-
mers. Mothers helping
their daughters, as they
drift away, some falling
into trance, some trying to.*

*I'm holding on to my cam-
era, just digging the music.*

*Great party and I walked
home, through the streets*

of good, old Havana, feeling just fine.

Sorry, taking a little break here. Three steamed potatoes with salt, then I have to get some things done at the gallery, where I will hold the next exhibition.

Havana Mask Dance, featuring The Red Bag, playing also video shorts of the Santeria recordings.

When I get back, let me tell you about the big party at Yerilu's home.

The evening started out, by me going to meet Pipo at his house and together we went to join the party.

Plenty of people already around. Hello. Can you buy some rum, which one, a name was mentioned and we took a walk to the store.

They didn't have that particular one, try the store a

little further down the road.

No luck, but plenty of rum.

We chose a good one and figured it will be killed in no time. Back to the party.

Yerilu lives with her parents in a nice neighborhood, where the houses were converted, just like downtown, to accommodate more people, than they originally were meant for.

So everybody's got a roof over their head, but it can get quite crowded, which didn't affect the party spirit at all.

There were three, you may say four parties in a row.

Party number one started, the moment the music came out of the boxes.

On the veranda out into the streets, mainly kids started to groove.

*Two caught my eye, they
were going at it, like that
cool young guy at the party
with grandma and that
very, very woman.*

*Right there on the side-
walk. Where there is space,
there is room to dance and
there is always a reason to
dance.*

*Talk about a national fit-
ness program, in Cuba, be-
fore anything else, there is
always dance.*

Next a clown entertained the kids and as always, the laughter of the kids infected everyone around.

More people and now it got real. Crammed into the Kitchen, in the hallway, on the veranda, were family and friends of Yerilu.

In the corner of the kitchen, opposite the entrance was the Santeria shrine.

I stood with my back to the shrine, so I could video the musicians.

Pipo, Michel, Yerilu, her father and a friend on conga.

Michel beating the rhythm on the metal, which looks like the blade of a shovel, with a metal stick.

Pipo and Mr. Lugo play the chekeres and did they play.

Yerilu, voice, on her home turf, greeting people as they come in, not missing a beat

and the mood and temperature are getting better and hotter.

Two sets of music, with the musicians rotating and yes, I almost forgot, Michel was singing the introduction and he sang it very nicely.

Ceremony over, we all ate and drank and another party started to kick off, Rumba, but Pipo and I had to go, so see you next time.

Another day Pipo, his wife and their daughter came over to my place. They had been in the neighborhood to buy new shoes.

As we were talking, Pipo suddenly said to his daughter, they are playing your Rumba.

His daughter looked at him, walked out of the room onto the balcony and listened into the Havana Evening.

They went home to Cerro and we agreed to call each other in a couple of days.

Taking in the evening, with the sounds illuminating the city, I went out to get something to eat.

Coming back home, I remembered the day, when Pipo played at someone's place, telling me, come, it will be different.

The main, obvious difference were the instruments.

Chekere and Conga. For me it was a First and I listened intently and after a while there were other differences, I could hear, but never express in words.

When I arrived there were still few people and I sat down near the musicians. But then there were so many people coming, that I made space for the Ladies in White.

To sit down in the backyard, at some distance

from the musicians, but no distance to the music.

It was a very intense experience and I heard sounds and rhythmic combinations coming from the Conga, I hadn't heard before.

Learning, without knowing what I was learning, only knowing, that my ears were feeding my brain, myself with sounds, to still my hunger and thirst for music, that meant more than

the dancing of my feet, my legs, my body.

The heart feeling good, the state of not knowing, was not such a bad thing, after all I could still cross the busy Havana streets, without getting run over.

But slowly, slowly it all sinks in, letting you to become a person to know, not necessarily in words, but in the eyes, in the body, in the mind, in where you walk, when and how.

Emilio called me, Hans my friend wants to meet you, she is going to a Santeria party, you want to go there.

I went to her home, having been told, that her husband had died a few years back and that she was rather lonely. Well, nothing wrong with that.

Up a few flights, found the apartment and her boyfriend invited me in.

She was still busy, getting ready, so we talked about music and how much I love Cuban percussion and he said, then you must listen to Tata Güines and Anga.

He played me a tape of their music, I looked later for the CD, couldn't find it in Havana, but finally did in Europe.

My mind open like a dry sponge, the drumming on congas just juiced me up

and it was time to go to the party.

I make this a little short.

The drummers were cold.

I didn't need that, but I learned from this, too.

Her boyfriend and I needed a soft drink, so we slipped out of the party during a break and I didn't go back.

After having listened to so much good music from Pipo, his family and all the friends around him and

now being juiced up by Tata Güines and Anga, I preferred to move on and enjoy the noise of the street.

Better music was coming from the streets, than from those cold drummers.

On an earlier visit to the home of the Massip Family, the video as well as the sound recording didn't work out for many reasons, but this time it was going to be just fine and it really was.

The Massip Family I will further on introduce to you some more, right now it is Pipo, his father Lazaro and his brother Michel.

Like many times before Yerilu was joining them as the Singer.

There were some more musicians around and a few more friends, even some visitors from abroad, who Ricardo, Pipo's cousin, had met downtown and asked to come along.

The light was good, the atmosphere relaxed and we slowly got ready.

Remember we did this to have a good recording of Pipo, his Dad, his Brother and Yerilu.

No holiday, no other special occasion, no priest, only few people, sitting around casually.

But when the music started, in no time everybody was focused, sang along or

just tapped their feet to the rhythm and the room was filled with an intensity, as on any other religious ceremony occasion.

No let down, no let's just do this for the camera, no for a little afternoon pocket money we do a little gig for the tourists.

This for me was as real as on any other afternoon evening session I had attended before.

Maybe the Gods were too busy to join us, maybe they didn't even have time to listen and smile at us, wishing us well, but everybody there and of course me, too, was touched by the musicians and their music.

This, as well as all the other video and sound recordings are live, with one mike. You hear the room , you hear the direction of the sound with or without the visuals and for all the

wonderful recordings I had bought up until now and will continue to buy for the love and the knowledge of the music, I wouldn't want to miss those live experiences, being there body and soul. Listening to and viewing them a few days, a few years later, doesn't put me at a distance, but rather draws me closer to the very live experience.

When I just talk about it to friends or give a little lec-

*ture, my mind travels back
and when the music gives
me those unmistakable
chills down my spine , I am
back, right there with the
music and maybe the gods
have time and smile a little
smile.*

*And if the gods are still
busy, there is always music
or a particular musician,
that shines and sends me
looking for the next musi-
cian, music, smile.*

Many 30 years ago, John Bonham played a very, very extended drum solo on Moby Dick and I be damned, if there isn't more than once Africa smiling and shining through.

And if I am wrong, it still is more than worth to listen to the drumming.

Nobody likes to be wrong too many times, especially on the same page, so ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce a little percussion

discussion, courtesy of Art Blakey and Ginger Baker.

*Where do you find this,
on The Album, more de-
tails in the back.*

*You'll find some of the
finest drumming of Tony
Williams and Ginger Baker
listening to PIL, back to
back.*

*Why, wait, first there still is
M'Boom, initiated by Max
Roach, a celebration of Per-*

cussion Music, by some of the very finest musicians.

There was a plan, as a matter of fact studio time was already booked, to bring together in a M'Boom session Max Roach, Tony Williams and Ginger Baker.

They didn't get to the studio, instead went to the funeral, since Tony Williams had moved on.

So let their music come together in our minds, I am sure it will move us all.

It may sound like I am getting lost, but I am just in love, so when I came across the album “Survivors”,

Max Roach with strings, it just blew me away and made me listen up.

Does this get us away from Africa, from Cuba.

How could it, they are always there.

You want to get further away from, closer to the source, a maybe rather unusual route is by way of MAX ROACH and CECIL TAYLOR.

Are we climbing too fast, running out of breath, snacks and water, let's take a break, before we move on.

Allow me to insert two quotes by Max Roach here, for a deeper and better understanding of anything to do with drumming.

“Ghanaba was so far ahead of what we were all doing, that none of us understood what he was saying - that in order for African-American music to be stronger, it must cross-fertilize with its African origins...we ignored him. Seventeen years later the African sound of Ghanaba is now being imitated all over the United States.”

“I wrote a piece in 9/4 and my daughter, Maxine Roach, took it and rewrote it for the Uptown String Quartet. She divided the drums among the strings. One part of my body, she let the cello play and another part was played by the first violin and so on. The result is unbelievable. Dave Brubeck was supposed to have said: God bless that child, for the first time I

hear, what a drum set really is.”

I believe in the same du article, years ago, I had read, how Max Roach had asked his daughter to take Elvin Jones and rewrite his playing for a string quartet.

Wherever I read it or if my memory, with all the music in my head, took several statements and turned it into one, I think, what Maxine Roach did with her father's composition, she

*sure could do with the
Drumming of Elvin Jones.*

*But I do remember, people
in the know on several oc-
casion saying, Elvin Jones
is four guys playing in one.*

*Before there was drum-
ming in my head, there
were voices with plenty of
rhythm around the house
and among my friends.*

*And they were kept like
precious stones on those*

*black, be very careful 45
rpm round things.*

*I remember Paul Robeson,
Harry Belafonte and Sam-
my Davis Jr. and I vividly
remember, how I went
across the street to one
friend and asked him,
could you play Tutti Frutti
for me and further down
the road to another friend,
please let me hear Lucille.*

*That was the initiation rite
to what was to follow,
thanks to Little Richard.*

One such thing, that was to follow, was looking at a video in the home of Manek Daver in Tokyo, showing lots of people at the wake of Thelonious Monk.

Then Max Roach was getting up, walked up on stage and towards the drums. Sat down and started to play.

I remember that, because I said to myself, audible still, I love that man and always remember, how I learned

*listening and seeing from
his drumming.*

*If awe is inspiring, here
you go. On and on I went,
to find Cuban Percussion
driving some of my all time
favorite music.*

*Jack Bruce playing Cream
classics and Eric Clapton
joining and my jaw drops
in awe and my body starts
dancing, standing, sitting,
lying down. I'm inside,
outside, everywhere.*

*Music, Drumming, some
food and coffee or tea.*

And then suddenly a book.

*A pocket book, Cadia gave
me in passing.*

*Thinking of it, she knew
what she was doing.*

Sundiata, King of Mali.

*Alexander, Hannibal,
Ashoka, Caesar, Napoleon,
history books sure, even
movies, but music.*

*If Sundiata has a rival,
maybe it's Ashoka.*

***Look at the images, sounds
and dances all the way
from India to Bali.***

***(And what the Roma and
Sinti brought over to Eu-
rope and Beyond).***

***Sundiata at one time ruled
all the way, from the West
Sudan to the West Coast of
Africa.***

Look at all those drums.

Rhythm over rhythms.

Colors, Dances, Masks.

***A Living Cultural Heritage
Museum.***

***London, Washington, Paris,
altogether in one and then
some more.***

And always living.

***Today, tomorrow and yes-
terday still.***

***In the body of the drums,
in the sounds of the drums.***

***Maybe, while you are sleep-
ing, eating, walking, talk-
ing, there is the sound of
the drums, sitting in a tree,***

*walking through the street,
traveling through your
mind, touching your soul
and shaking your, yes well,
your precious behind.*

*Walk to your inner drum
and smile, when you hear
the drum of another one.*

*And while walking, another
book comes my way.*

THE HEALING DRUM

African Wisdom Teachings

*YAYA DIALLO a musician
from Mali, is the thread, on*

*which the beads of life
dance in all colors and
MITCHELL HALL a writer,
from French to English into
the Book about Africa.*

*From Africa to the Americ-
as, around the World.*

*Knowledge, Teaching, Wis-
dom, Boundless.*

*What a pleasure to read,
learn and yearn for more,
to listen, to dance and to
stretch the muscle brain.*

Music, more music.

Milford Graves:

GRAND UNIFICATION

Guy Warren:

THE DIVINE DRUMMER

Fela Ransome-Kuti:

THE AFRICA '70, LIVE!

(Tony Allen / Ginger Baker)

By the way, Fela Kuti is a history lesson worth checking out and one can dance to while doing so. The beat, the lesson continue through Femi Kuti, his son.

Tony Allen:

LIVE and HOMECOOKING

Whoever invented what in matters of Afrobeat, he is no back seat driver and actually needs no introduction, but to be sure, you don't miss out on the absolute pleasure of listening and dancing to him, one more time, Tony Allen.

Before our travels bring us back to Cuba, let me mention three very different

*musical experiences from
West Africa.*

*Ade Olumoko and African
Spirit:*

YORUBA APALA MUSIC

*At whatever time on your
musical journey you may
have a chance to listen to
their music, it will teach,
make sense and move you,
in and out of everything be-
fore and after. It's one of
those root things. Enjoy.*

Field Recording in Ghana:

DRUMS OF DEATH

***What a way to go. From
Ghana to Haiti, maybe even
as far as New Orleans.***

***And while this is music
played at funerals, life
doesn't stop there, it just
goes on.***

Pathe Beye:

ADOUNA - One World

recording: Dakar & Vienna

***He traveled through many
countries and carried a lot***

of music with him, from Africa to Europe.

Sagar Beye's singing makes me wish, they could have done more music together in Europe and in Africa, but Pathe moved on, leaving us with many wishes and some very fine music.

Back in Havana, let me introduce five more CDs with wonderful music from around Cuba, to listen and dance to.

CANTOS DE CONGOS Y PALEROS:

***Life recordings from Sagua
la Grande, Villa Clara,
Quiebra Hacha, Mariel, La
Habana, Palmira, Cienfue-
gos, Jagüey Grande, Man-
tanzas, Trinidad and Sancti
Spiritus. Quite a trip
around Cuba, get on the
bus and enjoy the music.***

DANCES OF THE GODS:

***While also a field trip
around Cuba, emphasis is***

***on the different Afro-Cuban
Cults.***

***The Araraa Cult (Songs and
Dances for the Fodduce),
Voodoo Cult (Haitian), San-
teria (Bata), Congo/Palo
Monte, Santeria (Abwes),
Wemba of the Abakwa,
Tambor Yuka and finally,
La Rumba.***

***It's a gem and a good way
to start your journey.***

DRUMS OF CUBA:

Grupo Oba-Ilu went into the studio in Havana and celebrated the major Afro-Cuban religions, Santeria, Abakua, Arara, Palo and Iyesa and what you get is a very detailed and rich sound experience.

ONI-ONI:

Oloyu Obba was recorded in a studio in France and let their hands and voices walk through many percussion instruments and songs from Santeria to Rumba.

It is, as always an enriching experience. Just when you think you have heard it all, there is the sound of a voice, of a drum, of a wooden stick, that make it new again.

***JULIEN LOURAU
VS RUMBABIERTA***

To the “usual” percussion fiesta were added, saxophones, keyboards, bass and guitars and after hearing a few sounds, I just

bought it, no questions asked. Add it to new again.

Books, only three:

MUNTU by Janheinz Jahn

I came across this book in a jazz magazine article and Cecil Taylor mentioning it.

Browsing through it in a bookstore, there was NOMMO as a chapter and now I understood better the music by the same name, on an album of Max Roach.

Writing today about the book, all I want to say is, go to page 62 and read about The Santeria, but then I think you would want to read the whole book, really.

You will find yourself coming closer to Africa as the source of Santeria and many things African, wherever you go.

African Rhythm and African Sensibility, Aesthet-

***ics and Social Action in
African Idioms by JOHN
MILLER CHERNOFF.***

***That is a lot of African in
the title and a must read on
things African.***

***Fela Anikulapo Kuti's name
comes up, before the book
even starts and once it gets
going, it will take you all
over the place African.***

A book with an endless title, an almanac, edited by Esther A. Dagan.

THE SPIRIT'S DANCE IN AFRICA. EVOLUTION, TRANSFORMATION AND CONTINUITY in SUB-SAHARA.

A big and heavy book, you can start reading, by balancing it on your head.

So much about DANCE, in photos, drawings and texts by many authors, a great

reference source for anything you hear and see, from and about AFRICA and of course SANTERIA.

Regarding the COLORS, that will be chosen for you to wear, let me introduce some examples.

The list is not complete, since informations vary and I therefore only mention those, I found to be the same, coming from three different sources.

ELEGGUA 3 black 3 red

OSHUN 5 yellow 5 orange

OBATALA white

YEMAYA 7 blue 7 white

OGUN 7 green 7 black

CHANGO 6 white 6 red

***As you go along, you will
come across different
spellings and some differ-
ent colors, even variations
in the number of the beads.***

***In all cases the number of
beads indicate a pattern,***

which is to be repeated, as long as you want or need the necklace to be.

Please do not choose colors or patterns, like you would for a souvenir, a gift or some decoration.

Let the people, who initiate, guide and help you on your way, be your advisors.

MOMENTUM SPACE, the title of not just another CD, but the music of Dewey*

Redman, Cecil Taylor and Elvin Jones and here mentioned for the following quotations:

Discipline, in this society, has to do with sin. It doesn't have anything to do with joy. The expression of life is confused as a result of sin. Whatever my mother's intent was, she insisted that six days of the week I practice. And I had to practice. And I mean practice. On Sunday she said, 'You

can do what you want.'
That's when the organiza-
tion of my music began.
(Cecil Taylor)

There is no such thing as
freedom without some kind
of control, at least self-dis-
cipline. It's impossible.
There are such things as
free forms and I think I've
heard that done. John
Coltrane did a lot of exper-
imenting in that direction,
and so did a few other peo-
ple. I was closer to Coltrane

than to anyone else so I can speak with some authority on him... (Elvin Jones)

One morning in 1968, I was in the studio, and I just went crazy. I looked around me, and I saw Ornette, Mister Jimmy Garrison and Mister Elvin Jones, the guys with Coltrane. And I said to myself: 'But I have no right to be here! There are so many others better than me!' Jimmy saw I was shaking like a leaf, he took

me into a corner of the studio and said: 'If Ornette chose you, it's because you're good. So just play, don't think about anything else.' (Dewey Redman)

**A three-dimensional space in which each particle of a physical system is represented by a point whose three Cartesian coordinates are numerically equal to the components of its momentum in the directions of the three coordinate*

axes. (Oxford English Dictionary)

Momentum Space, a term taken from Physics.

It aptly describes the music you can hear on that CD.

I believe, it also brings you another step closer to the Rhythm of the Three Bata Drummers.

Do I need a dictionary, when listening to the drummers, no, you may just dance, your body will

*be a great teacher, just let
the rhythm move you.*

*For many good reasons, I
will not write here, what
you can do for your brain
to join your every muscle,
because I do not know you
and when and where, the
drums will talk to you.*

*But one thing I can say,
without doubt and fear of
being misunderstood,
RELAX and let the rhythm
carry you. You won't get
lost, because even if there*

*are no more signposts,
there are people coming
and going your way.*

*The Orishas, why worry,
you got a quarrel, for all
you know, they join you
dancing.*

*DRUMS TALK, same way
as pictures do, to me any-
way. Admitted, I can read
photos much better, than I
even can start saying, that I
can hear, what drums are
saying. Naturally, because I
learned photography as a*

teenager and dived into it and became so much involved and engulfed, that I again made sure to read books, talk with friends and listen to music, so as not to loose the ability to communicate in everything else, besides photographs.

Now before you catch me flatfooted, let me say, while I believe, that we can translate anything from one media to another, it of course is necessary or at least

helps, when two people talking in whatever language or media, know what they are talking about.

So when you grow up with drums, while still in the belly of your mum, well you win, but if at least you grow up hearing drums day in and day out on various occasions, that make up the daily life of your community, than that's the closest anyone can get to

understand the talking of the drum.

Living in the city, going to school, without the drum and the native tongue being taught, the knowledge of the drum and the understanding of what's being said, gets lost, just as watching television only or mostly, makes you loose the ability to read certain books or newspapers.

Reading a newspaper, with little content in the text and

mostly pictures to catch the eye, leaves us literally illiterate, when it comes to more complex issues and more elaborate ways of expressing ourselves.

So now, if you didn't know it anyway or don't need to read to believe it, Drums Talk and how they talk, you can learn.

Right here and now let me give you a link:

www.djansa.be/extra_articles.php?lang_id=3&art_cat_id=894&lstr_id=320

I know you think this is a joke, but no matter which way I tried, I couldn't get from the first page to the article any other way than using my bookmarks.

I know you are polite, please bear with me and enjoy the article, because there are plenty of more cross references, to make reading it worthwhile.

No joke, I found the way.

www.djansa.be

If as in my case, you choose English to continue, you will get to the following:

You are here: Main > Instruments > Bata > How Bata Talks

(To start please click Extra, click Instruments and then proceed as above.)

***THE MIDDLE PASSAGE,
as a reminder, in the music***

*of Ginger Baker, on board
of the many hundreds,
maybe thousands of boats,
making the crossing every
year and in the bodies and
souls of the millions of
people, who were forced to
go on a voyage into the un-
known, with no stars to
guide them, but their spir-
its, reminding them of the
beats, the drums, their
hands, their lives, their cul-
ture.*

We are all richer for it and owe it to ourselves, to never sit back and just let it be in the past, but let that past be a reminder of a better future, with lots of drums and dancing.

***DANCE IS THE MIRROR
OF OUR LIFE AND BE-
YOND. IT REFLECTS OUR
LINKS TO THE SPIRITS,
OUR DIALOGUE WITH
THE PAST AND OUR***

***PRESENT FEELINGS AND
THOUGHTS.***

JOMO KENYATA

In conversation with E.A.D

Breaths.

In the African world view, the invisible world of spirit, man, and the visible world of nature exist along a continuum and form an organic reality. The same is true of the relationship between past, present and future. In Birago Diop's poem Breaths we are reminded of this continuum.

The women of Sweet Honey in the Rock sing the follow-

*ing poem to the music of
Ysaye Maria Barnwell.*

*(Barnwell's Notes Co.
copyright 1980)*

*Above text and the poem
quoted from the album
sleeve of GOOD NEWS:*

*Listen more often to things
than to beings*

*Listen more often to things
than to being*

Tis the ancestors' breath

*When the fire's voice is
heard*

*Tis the ancestors' breath
in the voice of the waters
ah.....wsh.....*

ah.....wsh.....

*Those who have died have
never never left*

*The dead are not under the
earth*

*They are in the rustling
trees*

*They are in the groaning
woods*

They are in the crying grass

*They are in the moaning
rocks*

*The dead are not under the
earth
(refrain)*

*Those who have died have
never never left*

*The dead have a pact with
the living*

*They are in the woman's
breast*

*They are in the wailing
child*

*They are with us in the
home*

*They are with us in the
crowd*

***The dead have a pact with
the living
(refrain)***

***Original poem, Breaths by
Birago Diol you can find on
quaker.org***

***On a last round through the
internet, looking for a con-
temporary recording from
the source, in today's Nige-
ria, I came across a CD and
a book.***

First a few words about the book. I went over to the leading English language bookstore and asked them about the book I had found on the internet and if they could get it for me.

They checked in one of their lists. Mind you the book was published in 1961.

They found two copies, one in the US and one in the UK. I asked them to get the

one, which was in a better shape.

It took a good while, but finally they called me and said, your book is here.

How much is it? 70 Euros.

Now the clerk started looking for it, but couldn't locate it right away.

I thought, 70 Euros might mean quite a hefty book, like maybe 2cm thick or more.

Couldn't locate it either.

Finally, there it was. Sort of a paperback of about a hundred pages.

You don't have to take it, if it is not what you were looking for.

No, I'm fine. 70 Euros and it is worth every cent.

***YORUBA SACRED MUSIC
FROM EKITI***

ANTHONY KING

B. Mus. (Lond.)

Lecturer in Music.

University College Ibadan
IBADAN UNIVERSITY
PRESS 1961

The CD is called:

Isese L'agba

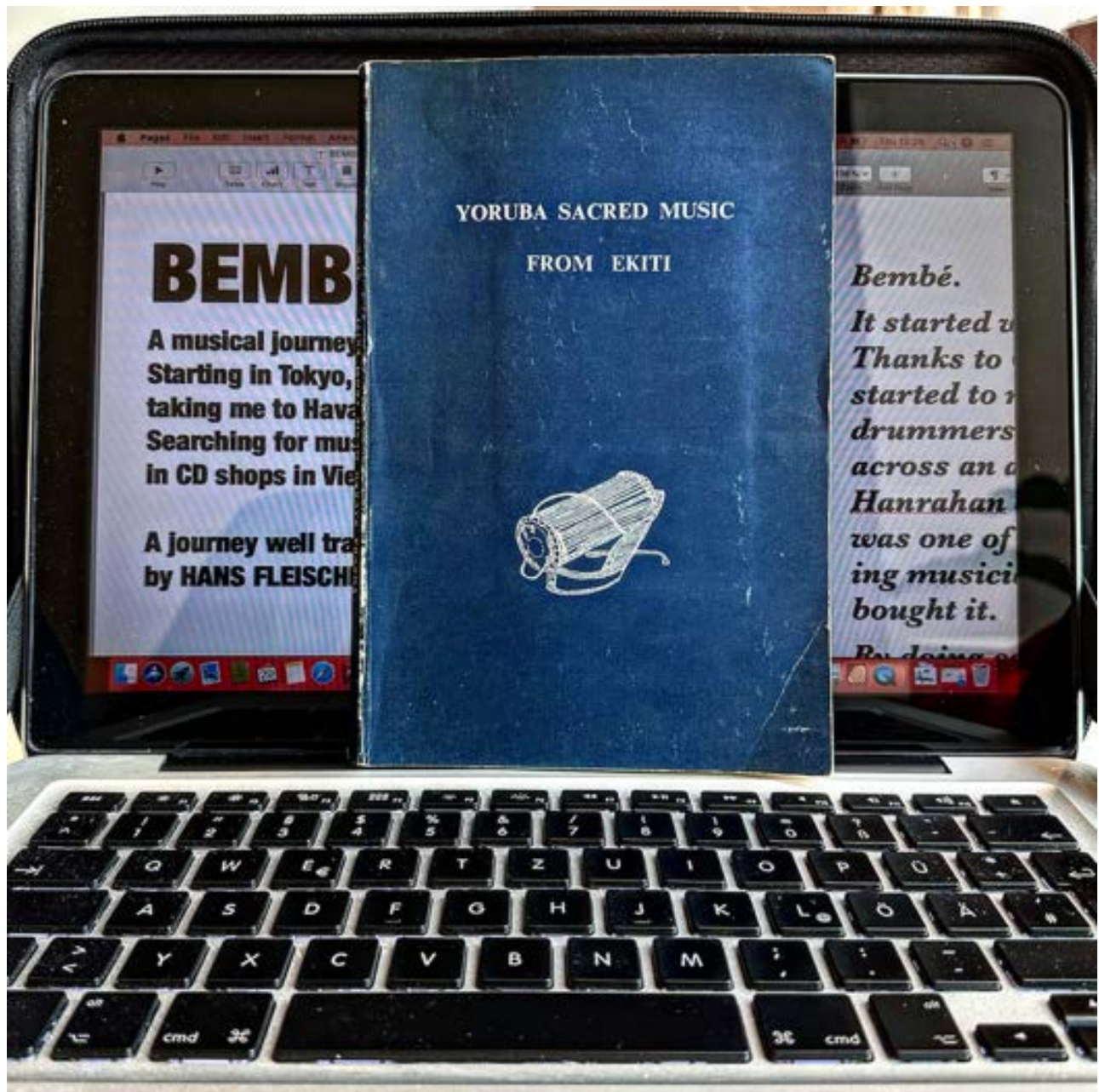
ASABIOJE AFENAPA

***(& Traditional Ifa/Orisha
Bata Musical Band)***

For Enquiries Contact:

Priest Adewale Bogunmbe

walebogunmbe@yahoo.com



YORUBA SACRED MUSIC
FROM EKITI



BEMBE

A musical journey
Starting in Tokyo,
taking me to Havana
Searching for music
In CD shops in Vienna

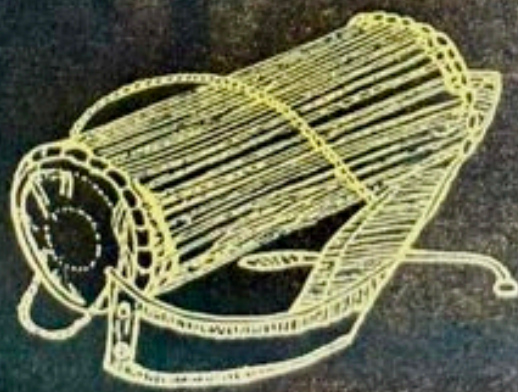
A journey well travelled
by HANS FLEISCHER

Bembé.

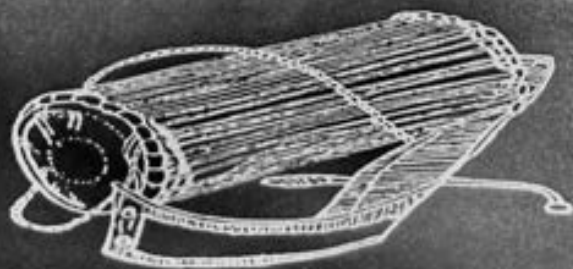
*It started with a bembé.
Thanks to a friend,
I started to learn from
drummers
across an ocean.
Hanrahan
was one of the best
ing musicians I
bought it.*

By doing so...

YORUBA SACRED MUSIC
FROM EKITI



YORUBA SACRED MUSIC
FROM EKITI



Pipo Massip.

***His family, his friends,
were mentioned quite a few
times here, so some visual,
audio record would be very
nice.***

***On the internet, as an in-
dependent movie, you
name it. I'm thinking.***

***Maybe Pipo and or Ricardo
have ideas.***

I would be listening.

Let's see.

*I can hear Yerilu say loudly,
What!?*

Let's see.

Maybe you have an idea.

Let me hear about it.

*Whichever way, something
will be happening.*

Hans Fleischner

Vienna 2023, July.

