

Middle School General Music Unit Plan Overview

Name: Anna Kruger

Unit Topic/Title: Music in Africa

Detailed Unit Description:

This unit is designed to get students to begin thinking outside the box of western pop music. It starts by introducing students to the continent of Africa itself, including the regions of North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa which helps group the music stylistically. Students gain an overview of the music of each region through webquests, listening to and watching performances on Youtube, and through brief readings. Students experience the music on their own as they play, compose, and improvise traditional rhythms on drums. They reflect on their experiences in their journal, and have a short playing quiz/test over the material at the end of the unit.

List Unit Objectives:

Students will gain a basic understanding of music and its uses in the continent of Africa and its 5 regions.

Students will experience a variety of Africa’s music and reflect on it in their journals.

Students will experience a variety of traditional West African instruments.

Students will play traditional rhythms on percussion instruments.

Students will improvise along with a recording using traditional rhythms.

Students will compose their own piece using traditional African instruments.

Materials List and Budget (if any): Also see list of possible substitutions at the bottom

Item(s)	Qty.	Cost	Source/Vendor
Djembe (small)	10	10.00/drum	http://store.drumbum.com/skuPRC-30.html
Staff paper	25 sheets	Free	Musictheory.net
aslatua	5	8/aslatua	http://www.djembedirect.com/store/hand_percussion?ac=google&gclid=CJOGxq7Rh5kCFQwDGgodlFKjlw
Shekere	5	9/shekere	http://www.mothersrhythm.com/store/rubber-seed-shekere
Caxixi	5	10/caxixi	http://www.djembedirect.com/store/hand_percussion/1/

Justification. (What is the value of this Unit. How does it connect to students’ lives? Why teach it?):

Learning about the music of other cultures helps us understand people from other cultures, and since this is such a global age, that’s important. We need to be able to connect with and

understand others. It helps us recognize connections between our music and music of other cultures as well as recognize connections between music and social science. Many of the slaves that came to the United States during the slave trade came from West Africa and we can see how their music has influenced our music. Through the study of music from West Africa, we can draw connections to Blues, Rhythm and blues, Rap, Rock, etc. Students are also able to experience the music themselves with the African percussion. This could be taken out if needed, and though it's not cheap, it's a tangible connection to the music being discussed throughout the unit. If needed, the teacher could construct passable representations of all of the instruments to save money. Directions for doing so can be found here:

<http://rhythmweb.com/homemade/tubes.htm>

Substitutions can be made as follows (taken from

<http://www.childrensmuseum.org/teachers/unitsofstudy/drumbeats/ch4webqu.pdf>):

You can substitute an *agogo* or a cowbell for the *gankogui*, a *maraca* for the *axatse*, a bongo drum for the *kaganu*, and a conga drum, or a *djembe* for the *kidi*, *sogo* or *atsimivu* drum.

Any pot or pan, pan lid, copper pipes, or anything metal makes a great bell (ringing) sound; an empty plastic coke bottle or any plastic container filled with rice, sand, or small rocks makes a great rattle; any plastic janitor's drum or bucket, coffee can, even a cardboard box makes a great sounding drum. Try PVC pipe or a cool set of boomwackers. Adding anything that rattles is also acceptable.

Middle School General Music Unit Outline

Name: Anna Kruger

Unit Topic/Title: Music in Africa

Day	Objectives for the Day	Learning Activities to Meet Objectives	Michigan State Learning Standards Incorporated into Lesson	Materials Needed	Assignments & Assessments
1.	Students will gain an overview of the continent, the people, the regions, and the music of Africa.	Webquest where students learn about West Africa, its people, and music. The webquest has links to sites where students learn about several percussion instruments from Ghana and how to play them.	<p>Content Standard 4: All students will understand, analyze, and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.</p> <p>ART.IV.M.M.1 Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.</p> <p>ART.IV.M.M.3 Compare, in several cultures of the world, functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically performed.</p>	<p>Webquest, access to a computer lab</p> <p>http://www.childrensmuseum.org/teachers/unitsofstudy/drumbeats/ch4webqu.pdf has a lot of great ideas to get you started on your webquest. Using that website and a few others, I've constructed a sample one here:</p> <p>http://westafricanmusicwebquest.blogspot.com/</p> <p>(print out of webquest is</p>	Completion of the webquest.

2.	<p>Students will learn more about the music, and instruments of West Africa, including its uses in ritual.</p> <p>Students will reflect upon the way music is used in rituals in West Africa and in the United States.</p>	<p>Youtube videos Talking drums: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aso0r4Zq-F4 (demonstration and explanation)</p> <p>Ewe drumming http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QYBb3ee4pDo</p> <p>Hiplife: http://museke.com/node/5 (popular Hiplife artist) Can draw connections to Rap</p> <p>Funeral: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H5VCRjMqa8g</p> <p>Wedding: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=of1Up3M_Y5Q</p> <p>Reading packets</p> <p>Information adapted from https://web3.unt.edu/the/dso/index.php?portraits=african_music&action=textonly</p>	<p>Content Standard 4: All students will understand, analyze, and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.</p> <p>ART.IV.M.M.1 Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from a variety of cultures.</p> <p>ART.IV.M.M.3 Compare, in several cultures of the world, functions music serves, roles of musicians, and conditions under which music is typically performed.</p> <p>Content Standard 5: All students will recognize, analyze, and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life.</p>	<p>attached)</p> <p>Youtube videos</p> <p>Reading packets (Attached)</p> <p>Students need their listening journals</p>	<p>In their journals, students will reflect upon the way music is used in rituals in West Africa and in the United States.</p> <p>Sample prompts are: In two paragraphs, describe 2 ways music is used in rituals in West Africa. Compare that to ways music is used in rituals in the United States (graduation, weddings, etc.).</p>
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		Reflection in journal			
3.	<p>Students will gain a basic understanding of the rhythms (polyrhythms) used in West African Music.</p> <p>Students will improvise on instruments from West Africa using the rhythms they have learned.</p>	Experimentation/ Improvisation using the rhythms from West Africa	<p>Content Standard 2: All students will apply skills and knowledge to create in the arts.</p> <p>Content Standard 1: All students will apply skills and knowledge to perform in the arts.</p>	<p>Instruments, Knowledge of some rhythms to teach by rote.</p> <p>Youtube videos cued</p> <p>The majority of the time, music in West Africa is passed orally (aurally). Sample polyrhythms, techniques, and tips for teaching them can be found here:</p> <p>http://www.ancient-future.com/africa.html</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uFh0UXH5uM4</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4MVakxBbXg&feature=related</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWZty_2sFvk</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtmwhXJr570&feature=related</p>	Formative assessment as students are observed and some perform for the class.
4.	Students will compose	Composing	Content Standard 2: All students will apply skills and knowledge to create in the arts.	Notated rhythms	Formative

	ensemble pieces using traditional rhythms and instruments.	(does not necessarily need to be notated. Students may be able to perform much more complicated rhythms than they can notate. Class may come to the understanding that _____ rhythm is “rhythm A,” etc. Next to <i>djembe</i> , students may write “rhythm A for ___measures”, etc.	ART.II.M.M.4 Compose short pieces within specified guidelines	Instruments Staff paper	assessment as students are observed.
5.	Students will present their compositions. Students will demonstrate the knowledge they gained on the short test.	Performing Test-taking	Content Standard 1: All students will apply skills and knowledge to perform in the arts.	Instruments Tests Sample questions attached.	Summative assessment of performances and tests.

Welcome to the West African Music Webquest!

(<http://westafricanmusicwebquest.blogspot.com/>)

Using materials from different sources (and with a lot of help from <http://www.childrensmuseum.org/teachers/unitsofstudy/drumbeats/ch4webqu.pdf>) here's a West African Webquest!

The Mission: learn about West Africa-its countries, people, and music.

Complete each mini-mission in Microsoft Word by following the directions posted at the top of each. At the top left-hand side of your Word document, list your name, the date, my name, and write "West African Webquest." Just one more thing: You may only type in 12-point Times New Roman or Ariel fonts.

You can do it! Go!

Posted by Anna at 8:42 A.M.

[Mini-mission 1](#)

Visit www.nationalgeographic.com.

Scroll down the web site's home page until you come to the word Maps on the yellow SEARCH OUR SITE page frame and click on it. You will come to the Map Machine file page. Scroll down to the Find A Place location on the page, move the cursor in, and type the word, "Africa", then click on the Go button. You will come to the yellow FIND A PLACE file window. Click on the Africa continent file (top file). You will come to the DYNAMIC MAPS file page. Go to the Find A Place in Dynamic Maps location in the black DYNAMIC MAPS page frame, move the cursor in, type the word, "Africa", then click on the Go button. You will come to one more file window. Click out of this window (upper left square) and finally you will come to the DYNAMIC MAPS Political/Satellite Map file page and a satellite map of the continent of Africa. You can see from the map that Africa is a continent of many different climates and terrains.

In your Word document, list 2 climates and 2 terrains.

In your Word document, list the bodies of water surrounding Africa.

Posted by Anna at [8:41 AM](#)

[Mini-mission 2](#)

Leave www.nationalgeographic.com open and in a separate browser, visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Africa

In your Word document, list the countries in West Africa.

Scroll down to the section that says, "Culture and Religion." Answer the following questions in your Word document.

What are the predominant religions of West Africa?

What are popular pastimes in West Africa?

What are popular genres of music?

List and describe the instruments mentioned:

Posted by Anna at [8:41 AM](#)

Mini-mission 3

Close the Wikipedia article, and reopen www.nationalgeographic.com. Let's examine Ghana more closely.

Go to the Find A Place in Dynamic Maps location in the black DYNAMICS MAPS page frame, cursor in, type the word, "Ghana", then click on the Go button. You will come to the yellow Find A Place n Dynamic Maps file window. Click on the Ghana, a country, Africa file (top file). After clicking out of the file window (upper left square) you will come to the DYNAMIC MAPS POLITICAL/SATELLITE file page and a satellite map of Ghana.

Answer the following questions in your Word document.

What kind of climate does Ghana have?

What is its terrain like?

What countries border Ghana?

What ocean borders Ghana?

Locate and list the capital city marked with a star:

Posted by Anna at [8:40 AM](#)

Mini-Mission 4

Visit www.dancedrummer.com/html. Read and follow the directions, and answer the following questions in your Word document.

Scroll down and scan the front page, then go to and click on the purple Performance Gallery file title. You will come to the Performance Gallery file that contains the titles of three video dance/drumming exhibits from Ghana: Asiagbeko, Adzogbo, and Kogiri. Click on the purple exhibit title, Asiagbeko. When you come to the Asiagbeko page, read, copy, and paste the description of the cultural origins of this dance to your Word document. View the dance/drumming exhibit video by clicking the play button on the online video player. You can also fast-forward and rewind the video if you wish. This dance is being performed at a funeral and although it is a social dance today, the dance movements portray stories of past tribal warfare.

Now, click on the purple Back to the Performance Gallery file hotspot. When you come back to the Performance Gallery file, click on the purple exhibit title Adzogbo. When you come to the Adzogbo page, once again, read, copy, and paste the short cultural origin description of this

dance to your Word document. Click the play button of the online video player to view the dance/drumming exhibit video. This dance also portrays stories of tribal warfare from the past. Now, click on the purple Back to the Performance Gallery file hotspot. When you come

back to the Performance Gallery file, click on the purple exhibit file title, Kogiri. When you come to the Kogiri page, scan the picture of the kogiri, an African xylophone from this region, and click the online video player to view the exhibit video for a short sample of the sound of the xylophone.

Scroll down and click on the purple back to the front page file hotspot and when you get there, click on the blue Traditional Rhythms file title. You will come to the About Atsia and its rhythms page that contains a short description of the Atsia as well as a picture exhibit of the African percussion instruments used in the dance/ensemble: the gankogui (double iron bell), axatse (gourd rattle), kaganu (high pitched drum), kidi (medium pitched drum), sogo (low pitched drum), and the atsimevu (the lead talking drum pair that lean back on stands). This is one of the most traditional social dance/drumming ensembles in Africa. Read, copy, and paste the description of the cultural origin of the dance to your word document, then click on each instrument's name page title (under picture) to view its visual and sound sample exhibit and learn about the percussion instruments in the dance/drumming ensemble. When you come to each instrument's page, read the description about the instrument, then click on the play button on the online tape player to hear the instrument play the notated rhythm pattern that you see there. Each note that the instrument plays will highlight in red in the notated rhythm pattern as the rhythm pattern progresses in the sound sample.

In your Word document, describe in 4-6 sentences your favorite instrument and dance. Why are they your favorite?

Posted by Anna at [8:37 AM](#)

Mini-Mission 5

Visit <http://aviarts.com/demos/flash/abadjarhythm/>

Use <http://www.sabar.com/africa.html> to identify the instruments you see and hear. In your Word document, write the names of the instruments you see from left to right.

Take a few minutes to play around with the website.

Posted by Anna at [8:35 AM](#)

Bonus Mission

Congratulations on finishing the Webquest!

Print out your completed Webquest document and turn it in.

BUT WAIT, there's more!

If you have time during the remaining minutes of class, visit <http://www.dancedrummer.com/museum.html> and learn how to play the instruments for yourself.

West African Music Reading Packet

Information adapted from

https://web3.unt.edu/the/dso/index.php?portraits=african_music&action=textonly

It's misleading to speak of "African Music." The continent is large, with over fifty countries, each with different societies, and about 1,000 languages. For each language, there is a different music. Music varies as much as the environment, from rainforest to grasslands and desert, from villages to urban cities.

Yet scholars can't deny the existence of general musical features and vocabulary by which we can describe music of Africa. All African music includes: call-and-response, multi-part singing, short phrases that are complex and rhythmic. The music is popularly characterized as making use of repetition as a strength, buzzy tones, complex rhythms, in particular, two-against-three beat rhythms and polyrhythms (many rhythms unfolding at once). Each society's tradition may reinforce or contradict these characterizations.

We are focusing on West Africa because of its historical influence on the Americas since the era of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The merciless one-way passage for Africans over two hundred years ago has led to an ongoing cultural dialogue between the two continents, as you will read.



Image 2: Masked Dancer
from Sierra Leone
(Photo: Barbara Morrison-
Rodriguez)

Often there is no single word for "music" in West African lexicons. Kofi Agawu explains, as in the Ewe word 'vu', generally the concept of music is broader, and refers to dance, music and drumming altogether.

The most important aspect of West African music is in the power of the community. Both the collective spirit and the individual African genius are valued. The social aspect of the music can be seen in both singing and instrumental music. For example, the Liberian "solo" instrument with five strings is actually considered to have five voices, each string designated as a family member, such as mother, father, sister, brother, daughter, and so on.

Songs and dance lie at the heart of musical expression in West Africa. Music performance is best understood as having a wide range of expression, depending on the contexts and purposes for music-making—such as work, play, ceremony, ritual and worship. Instruments include all types of instrument categories.

The value and meaning of music are best understood by looking at the rich cultural heritage of various peoples, such as the Mende and Asante of the coastal rainforest, and the Mande-speaking people of the Savannah grasslands (south of the Sahara Desert and north of the coastal rainforest).

Mende Values and Performance

During the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, West Africans from the Rice Coast were among those most sought after because of their rice-growing skills. A high percentage of those who endured the voyage across the Atlantic to finally reach the port of Savannah, Georgia, were Mende, from Sierra Leone and Liberia. In the 1930's a linguist named Lorenzo Turner found that Mende words made up forty percent of the African words in the language of the Gullah people of coastal Georgia and the Sea Islands, who were known as the African Americans with the closest cultural ties to their African ancestors.



Image 3: Mende Village Women
(Photo: Cynthia Schmidt)

Women are important carriers of tradition throughout the African Diaspora. Beginning at a young age, Mende girls learn songs and dance movements in order to become a member of the women's society, called Sande or Bundu. (Men's societies are called Poro.) Young women must reach a culturally acceptable level of competence in performance. This experience becomes a form of *rite de passage* as they are also taught how to fulfill female adult roles. It is a time when women bond through their shared experiences, building sisterhood through songs and dances that will hold meaning throughout their lives.

In skillful hands, the women's instrument, the gourd rattle, *shegureh*, covered in beaded netting, can call out names and signal to dancers, for example, to pick up their feet or to slow down and relax their pace to the subtle rhythmic changes



Image 4: Mende Elders
(Photo: Cynthia Schmidt)

The pouring of respect for ancestors, with its deep and timeless values, is one of the oldest and most popular rituals among Africans living in the African Diaspora. It marks important occasions such as the gathering of the village elders, who command respect and dignity dressed in their traditional Mende hand-woven strip country cloth.



Image 5: Mende Slit
Drum Performer
(Photo: Cynthia Schmidt)

During a Mende event, as in other parts of West Africa, drum ensembles are integrated into all of the activities. Pertinent information must be conveyed by the lead drum at appropriate times. Even the most relaxed setting requires specific knowledge, good timing and precision in performance. The main drum that “talks” and improvises is a slit drum, called *kele*. Made from a hollowed log, it is carved skillfully to produce up to a hundred different tones depending on where the drummer strikes the four slits of the drum.

One of the aesthetics of West African music, which has continuity in African American music, is the manner in which different instruments are combined, each adding a different color, or timbre of sound. In this next musical example, the slit drummer is accompanied by a variety of support instruments, such as a membrane-head drum and a wooden “box drum” (played with the fist covered in cloth). A horn (made from a metal pipe) and a whistle playing short percussive patterns create an interesting combination of different timbres in the ensemble.



Image 6: Mende Drum and Horn Ensemble
(Photo: Cynthia Schmidt)

It has become popular both in the city and villages of Sierra Leone to employ functional substitutes for instruments, such as in the use of car mufflers or metal pipes for horns. Horn ensembles often play to support the local soccer teams, or to stir up interest for onlookers to come and join in street and village festivities, which includes the contemporary dancing masks that differ in their colorful, imaginative costumes from the Mende raffia masks of the rainforest.

Ghanaian Drum Ensembles and Royal Court Music

The Asante, who are one of Ghana's leading ethnic groups of the Akan languages, are often considered the custodians of the nation's culture because of the power, artistic splendor and duration of their empire, which covered nearly all of present-day Ghana by 1800. The proud traditions of the Asante include gold craftsmanship, wood carving and brightly colored woven cloth, called *Kente* cloth, which has also become symbolic in African American culture.

Cultures are often defined by their symbols and emblems, such as royal drums. This elaborately carved drum has the image of the *sankofa* bird carved near the "eye" of the drum. The *sankofa* bird is depicted with its feet pointing forward and the head and beak reaching behind "to take the good from the past as you move forward to the future".



Image 7: Carved Drum from Ghana

(Photo: Cynthia Schmidt)

Modern-day Ghana society still recognizes its traditional chiefs. One of the most high-ranking chiefs, the Asantehene (of the Asante), draws media attention from around the world when celebrating important events with elaborate durbars and royal processions.

Dignitaries in West Africa must be announced with music, whether in procession or stationary. For the Asantehene's ceremonies and processions, the royal court drum ensemble, called *Kete*, is played. Covered with traditional red and black fabric the drums are housed in the royal palace along with other royal regalia and items of adornment made from Ghana gold.

The music played by the *Kete* court ensemble is built on a three-part West African drum model consisting of 1) the large Master drum 2) at least two supporting drums (playing repeated patterns) and 3) a time keeper, playing the "time line" on a metallic bell or rattle. Every member of the ensemble listens to the "time line," which repeats in a cyclical fashion and must remain steady through long hours of performance.

Expectations are high for the Master drum player who must know the tradition of drum language, including proverbs and idiomatic sayings, which are still understood on the drum by many Asante people. He must also have the ability to "talk" using drum tones, and play established and improvised patterns to lead the ensemble and dancers.

Dancers of *Kete* during a ceremony interpret the rhythms in gestures that honor the Asantehene, the Queen Mother and the royal musicians. Even the Asantehene is expected to know the style of *Kete* movements and be a competent dancer.

Horns associated with music of the court in Ghana are made from elephant tusks. In various parts of Africa ivory horns, especially those decorated with leopard skin, denote power. Graduated in size, the horns alternate, playing only one pitch each, as in this example. This is known as "hocket" style (derived from "hiccough"), or the interlocking of two or more players, each playing a different tone.



Image 8: Gideon Alorwoyie
Faculty Member of UNT

Among the neighboring Anlo-Ewe people of southeastern Ghana, Togo and Benin, historic events are depicted in the Agbekor music and dance styles with their majestic, graceful yet

strong movements of warriors as seen in this photo of Midawo Gideon Folie Alorwoyie (Image 8). Ewe master drummer, priest, and a chief of his village. Beyond his traditional roles, he is a Professor at the University of North Texas where he teaches students to play the complex Ewe polyrhythms with precision.

Women's Ensembles

Drumming is a male specialty in many West African societies, but women have their own ensembles that substitute non-membrane instruments to provide rhythmic background for their songs. The Ga women of Ghana play the soft rhythms of bamboo stamping tubes, supported by a “time line” on the bell. Their ensembles, such is this example of elder women, play primarily for funerals. The meaning of the song in this next example is that a good person is usually not valued until he or she is gone.

Ritual Music

While music in West Africa can be entertaining or ceremonial, it is also sacred and healing. Music is a part of every ritual in West Africa, raising the energy of the participants to hear, see and experience things the rational mind could not. Around a fire, in healing rituals, men and women enter into heightened states of consciousness, aided by song, driving drum patterns and rhythmic dancing.

The individual rhythms of each of the Nigerian Yoruba gods of Shango, Ogun and many others were kept alive or transformed to become the basis for Afro-Caribbean religious practices. It was this knowledge of the power of music and ritual that was passed down through generations across time and space to the Caribbean (Brazil, Cuba and Trinidad) where Shango drum rhythms are still played on double-headed Bata drums (as in this example from Nigeria).

Music of the West African Savannah and the Blues



Image 9: Papa Susso
(Kora Player)

The dynamic role of the wordsmith in African and African American music can be seen in the continuum from the “praise singer” or *griot* of the West African savannah grasslands to the 21st century rapper.

The role of the “praise singer”, known to the Mandinka as a *griot* or *jali*, is one of the institutions of oral tradition that has continued from the ancient African empire of Mali (1223-ca. 1350). Mali is known as the region of historic West African kingdoms and of Timbuktu, a center for learning in the twelfth century. For centuries these spokesmen have sung the praises of the king of Mali and other epic heroes of the Mande-speaking people (Mali, Gambia, Senegal and Guinea).

The *jalis* are legendary vocal historians, who remember and perform the past through their expertise in family histories and genealogies. Formerly part of the court staff, they were both admired and feared for their ability to extol praises, but with license to publicly insult their patron and other people in high places. Today *jalis* tend to give less attention to the display of exclusive knowledge. Instead, the music dominates as they emphasize their role of traditional virtuoso on their instrument, the *kora*, which has wide appeal to many audiences.

The *kora* is one of the impressive string instruments in francophone West Africa. This harp-lute with 21 strings is held facing the player, and is played with only the thumb and forefinger of each hand. Short repeated phrases and arpeggiated patterns make up the delicate background to the main melody. In this example of the classic *Kelefababa*, the *jali* chronicles the history of a famous figure of a nineteenth century war between kingdoms in northern Gambia.

Just as the African American rapper is expected to artfully put words and rhythms together, a *griot* is judged by his facility with words. But the *griot* differs from the rapper in that he comes from a hereditary line of performers such as the Susso (Suso) family in Gambia (Papa Susso, [Image 9](#), and Foday Musa Suso, artist in musical example).

Foday Musa Suso

Many blues scholars have been interested in comparing the Delta Blues vocal style and instrumental playing techniques to the great musical traditions from the heart of the Savannah region. An uncanny similarity exists between the plucking finger technique of the indigenous lute and that of the blues guitar and the banjo.

In this example of the five-stringed instrument, the *halam*, one can hear the music that may have influenced the blues. This Wolof musician from Senegal sings and plucks the instrument, tuned to an open chord, occasionally striking the wooden resonator. The similarities to the playing technique of the banjo are remarkable.

The indigenous *halam* creates a buzzy timbre that is often desired. This effect has also become an ideal in the range of uses of the voice—shouts, moans, growls—as heard in African American spirituals and blues and which is common to West African performance.

The sound of American fife and drum bands, with repeated melodic phrases, can be heard in this Fula flute music from a cattle herding region of the Gambia basin. The setting is not complete without singing and dancing.

African Popular Music and the Contemporary Scene

Modern African cities have grown up rapidly, with local instruments from the countryside and indigenized styles played on imported instruments. Car muffler horns and modern adaptations of local instruments provide the beat for disparate lifestyles in urban areas.

Conscious of tradition, but in touch with the changing society, musicians are expanding their expressive range by incorporating new technology. Popular music genres are an imaginative blend of European and African resources, such as in the music of the electro-*griots*, such as Salif Keita.

Since the 1920's, an innovative finger-picking style was spread by Liberian sailors along the West African coast where people gathered to drink the local brew, palm wine. This early traditional pop music, called "palm wine guitar," grew out of a fascination for the western guitar, which inspired musicians to develop riffs based on indigenous instruments. This style eventually made its way eastward along the coast to former Zaire (Democratic Republic of Congo) where new influences of Afro-Cuban rumba music had taken hold. The re-Africanization of the rhythms (via African American and Latin rhythm) combined with African melodies to crystallize into the popular music of the 1960's. This lively guitar style ignited in popularity around the continent, and continues to be a favorite dance party music, or Afropop.

Afropop music can now be heard on the air-waves around the world. Many of the West African genres—juju, highlife, mbalax—have gone global, to reach audiences via the electronic media, but their origin and most authentic performances lie deep in urban Africa.

Sample Test Questions

Listening

The teacher will play short clips of various instruments we have studied. Write the name of the instrument you hear.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Writing

6. List three countries in West Africa

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7. List and describe three genres of music in West Africa

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9. List and describe three ways music is used in rituals in West Africa.

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Playing

10. Demonstrate a basic djembe beat, etc.