

Tuesday, Nov 28, 2017

OU to present World Music Concert, featuring Chinelo Amen-Ra, on Dec. 8

Renowned drummer Chinelo Amen-Ra will join Oakland University's Akwaaba African Ensemble, Ngoma World Percussion Ensemble and Pan-Jumbies Steel Band to present the annual fall [World Music Concert](#) at 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 8 in Varner Recital Hall.

The program will feature music from Africa and the Caribbean, according to [Mark Stone](#), an associate professor of World Music and Percussion in the School of Music, Theatre and Dance at Oakland University.

"As our weather gets cooler, there's something about the music of the Caribbean and Africa that helps warm people up when they hear it," Stone said. "It's something people should come experience for themselves."

According to Stone, the first half of the concert will include two pieces from the royal court of Buganda in East Africa, two pieces from Zimbabwe in Southern Africa, and four pieces from the Mali Empire, which existed from 1230 to 1670 in West Africa.

"These are the pieces we've been working on with Chinelo Amen-Ra," Stone said. "They feature the Djembe, a hand drum, and the Dunun, which is a bass drum."

Born into the Ngoma Za Amen-Ra Dance Theatre of Detroit, Chinelo has devoted his life to performing, studying and teaching rhythms of the African Diaspora. He was a 2016 Kresge Music Fellow and has been widely praised for his powerful and expansive drumming.

Currently, Chinelo holds the position of instructional assistant in the College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts at Wayne State University and serves as principal accompanist and music director for the "To Sangana" African Dance Company.

"In the second half of the concert, we're going to start off with a piece featuring Chinelo and a style of drumming from Cuba called Bata,'" Stone said. "That will be the one piece on the concert that will be just our guest artist with the ensemble directors."

According to Stone, the rest of the second half of the concert will feature Steel Band music, which originated in Trinidad and Tobago in the 1930s and spread to the rest of the Caribbean becoming one of the sounds most associated with island music in the minds of many visitors to the region.

"It's a very diverse program," Stone said. "We're going to have five musical traditions represented during the program. What other concert can you come to in Michigan where you can experience music from three different parts of Africa and two Caribbean, played at a high level by people who are experts in their respective traditions? I think people should come check it out."

Tickets for the World Music Concert in Varner Recital Hall are \$8 all seats. Varner Recital Hall is located on the Oakland University campus at 371 Varner Drive. Maps of the campus are available at oakland.edu/map.

Tickets may be purchased online without service fees at startickets.com. They can also be purchased at the Varner Box Office on OU's campus. Tickets ordered online or by phone can be picked up at the box office one hour before the performance begins.

Directions and complete ticket information are available on the OU [Music, Theatre and Dance website](#).

For more information about Oakland University Music, Theatre and Dance programs and performances, call (248) 370-2030 or visit oakland.edu/mtd.



Renowned drummer Chinelo Amen-Ra will be the special guest artist during Oakland University's annual fall World Music Concert on Dec. 8.