

Monday, Nov 02, 2015

Celebrating 40 Years of World Music at OU

Come to one of our two World Music 40th Anniversary Concerts on November 6 and you may find yourself wanting to follow-up with a study abroad trip to Ghana this summer! And why not?

So what exactly was happening 40 years ago in the fall of 1975? We asked Professor Emeritus Marvin (Doc) Holladay, who established both the jazz and the world music programs at OU, to share his recollections of the day of that inaugural concert when Ghanaian master drummer Abraham Adzenyah blessed the new drums and helped usher in the inspired and flourishing program we all cherish today.

“We were all elated to unpack the cases of drums and all of the paraphernalia that came with them. Getting them into the room where we had been holding the classes with Conga drums and other drums that we used to approximate the sound of the African drums, was a very exciting moment for all of us. It made a very big difference to the students, realizing the incredible difference they could not only hear, but feel, when they began to play the patterns on the real drums.”

“I approached Abraham Adzenyah, who taught at Wesleyan University, about coming to introduce the drums to our students. He recommended that we perform the Dedication Ceremony with him performing the dedication and I having the students ready to demonstrate what they had learned. The President and the Provost of the university was very supportive.”

“Adzenyah and Duodu, the dance instructor from Wesleyan, gave classes for a week to anyone in the university who wanted to learn more about the drumming and the dance movements that went with the drum patterns. That was a great week for many of our students and they participated in a performance.”

“The Dedication was quite unique for everybody in attendance. I read in English what Adzenyah said in Twi, and periodically he poured small amounts from a bottle of gin on the floor. We used the big room in the student center for the ceremony.”

“Students told me that African Drum Ensemble really taught them what it meant to bring the music ‘alive.’ It was the essence of what we had to do while learning to play those African patterns.”

There are 2 anniversary concerts on Friday, November 6. The first is at 10 a.m. and the second at 8 p.m. on November 6. Both are in Varner Recital Hall. Tickets are \$6 for the kids’ 10 a.m. concert and \$8 for the evening 8 p.m. concert.

Complete ticket information is available [here](#).

You can buy tickets for the 10 a.m. concert [here](#).



Learn more about Global Arts in Ghana in Summer 2016 [here](#).



Abraham Adzenyah



Marvin (Doc) Holladay