

Charles Ahovissi Drumming-Sessions



History of Benin West Africa Drumming

- Before telephone was invented African people used drums to communicate, tell stories and express their emotions and feelings.
- The griot (stories teller) sends the Royal court's messages' to the population.
- Nowadays, people have cell phones, email, mail deliver, etc.

“Adjogbo” means ‘to plant’ seeds in the ground

In Africa, we don't use written notes to learn the music. We use our eyes and ears to feel the rhythm.

Djembe Drum - Posture

- Sit tall on edge of seat
- Grip drum with both knees
- May wrap legs around drum; cross feet around front base of drum
- Tip drum forward to allow the sound/vibrations to come out

2 Different Drum Sounds – **LOW & HIGH**

- **LOW**: Middle of drumhead; LEFT hand, fingers together, slightly cupped
- **High**: Edge of drumhead; RIGHT hand, fingers together, ½ hand (from knuckles to fingers tips)

Group #1: (Drums – Djembe)

L. L. L. L. L.

Can you feel the beat?

H, H, L

Yes I can

H, H, L

Yes I can

H, H

Oh yeah



In order for participant to stay focus and concentrate on their patterns, I added the above words in red.

Group #2: (Drums – Djembe)

L, H. H. H.

Left right left right

Group #3: (Drums – Set of 3: Doum Doumba, Kin Kemi, Zamba)

L. L. L. L. L.

H, H, L

H, H, L

H, H



Group #4: (Drums: Agbadja w/ sticks)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (fast) – sticks together on drumhead

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (slow) – sticks together on sides of drum



Group #5: (other percussion)

Cowbell – beats 1 & 3 (hands up on 2 & 4)

Shaker – beats 2 & 4 (hands up on 1 & 3)