

African Welcome Piece

For Percussion Ensemble and Optional Chorus

Michael Udow

Edited by Fred Wickstrom

Instrumentation

- 1 Full Score
- 1 Percussion 1
- 1 Percussion 2
- 1 Percussion 3
- 1 Percussion 4
- 1 Percussion 5
- 1 Percussion 6
- 6 Percussion 7–12
- 6 Chorus

PROGRAM NOTE

The composer's avid interest in African Music occurred while studying with Bill Amawku, a master drummer and professor at the University of Ghana. Bill was teaching musicology at the University of Illinois during the '70-'71 school year. He grew up in the Eve Province in the Akan Community of Ghana.

There are three modes of drumming: the signal, the talking and the multilinal modes. AFRICAN WELCOME PIECE uses, extensively, the multilinal mode of drumming. This mode often accompanies dances in the tribe.

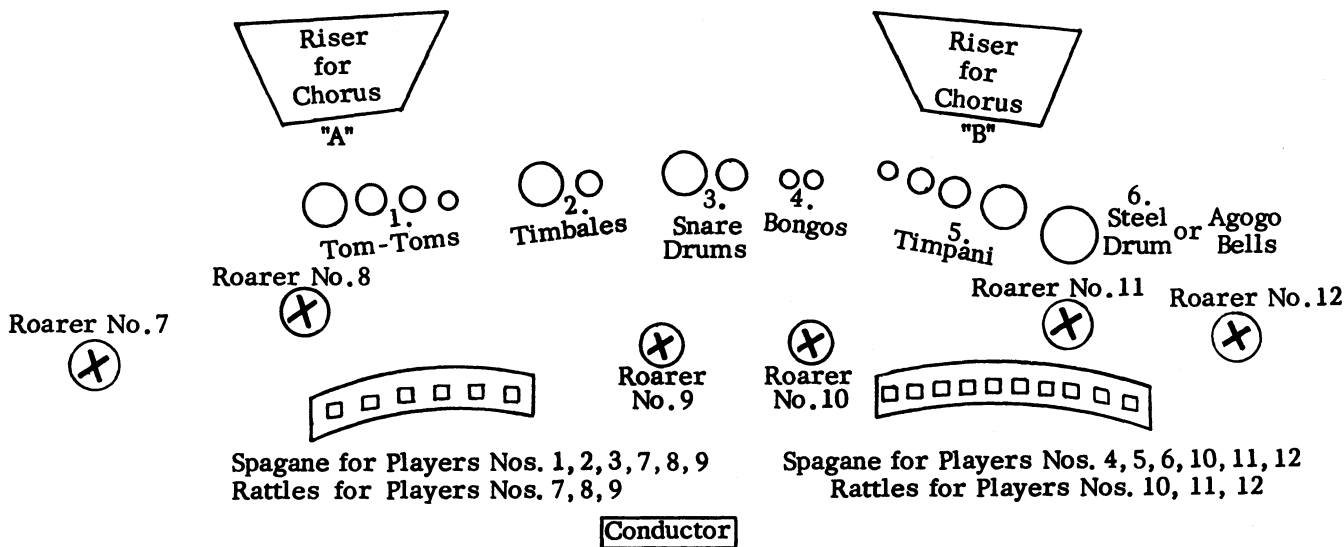
There are three specific rhythms used in this work. The first, the Agbadzá is a polyrhythmic structure in 12/8 and 6/8 meters. The second, the Tigeré Dance, is a cross rhythm in 6/8. The third, called the Hi-Life, a cross rhythm is 2/4, is a modern African restructuralization of an older rhythmic mode.

Mr. Udow has taken these three rhythms and composed this work with the energy and spirit which exist in all African communities.







His aim was not to duplicate an existent African musical type, but rather to extract the essentials of the musical style and mold it into a unique experience for "Western" percussionists.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

African Welcome Piece is best set up in this manner:



Sticks are indicated in the score and parts in the following manner:

-  - Snare Drum Sticks
-  - Hard Timpani Sticks
-  - Hard Bell Mallets
-  - Rattan Handle of any Mallet
-  - Triangle Beaters
-  - Snares on (for Snare Drummers)

Conductors and players are free to substitute different sticks to achieve a particular timbre which they feel is necessary for a specific performance. The performance will begin smoothly if all players memorize the first few bars of music. Players one through six should memorize their Spagane parts which should be played from a kneeling position in front of the instruments. Beginning entrances of players seven through twelve should be individually cued by the conductor. Tempo should begin on bar **[3]**. A series of improvised solos begins at bar 18. Written solos are included, but should be played only when players have difficulty improvising within the style of the piece. In bar **[65]** the last three quarter notes set the new tempo for bar **[66]**. Since ♩ = ♩ the actual pulse increases. Players seven through twelve should listen for the unison quarter note triplets which occur in bar **[133]**. These are indicated in their parts; they enter eleven bars later. The chorus should listen for the Rattles which make their entrance in bar **[144]**. They enter twenty-four bars later. Each section of the chorus should contain a minimum of six members. The important characteristics of the chorus are spirit and rhythm, not pitch and sound. A nasal tone and slight pitch discrepancies within each section will actually add to the effectiveness of the piece.

INSTRUMENT NOTES

Bull Roarers are slats of wood tied to a thong which make an intermittent roaring when swung through the air. They can be constructed of thin plywood or paneling cut in strips approximately 24" x 5". A hole should be drilled in one end and a swivel (similar to the type used in deep sea fishing) attached. A length of nylon chord is then attached to the swivel so that the slat may be swung over the player's head. Tie all knots securely, this is a lethal instrument! Gloves should be worn to protect the hands while playing. It is necessary to construct six Bull Roarers to perform this piece.

Spagane are clappers of the Honga people of South Africa. They are slats of wood with a leather band attached to the narrow end, thus permitting them to be worn as mitts. A reasonable substitute can be made by cutting 5" lengths of 2" x 2" or 2" x 4" lumber. The Spagane are played by striking them against the floor. Players should kneel when playing. It is necessary to construct twelve Spagane to perform this piece.

The Rattles necessary to perform this piece may be conventional Maracas or may be made from cans or plastic bottles and decorated with African Art.

Agogo Bells are a double cowbell-type instrument. They are commercially available. Two pairs (four pitches) are necessary to perform African Welcome Piece. The composer suggests that a steel drum is a suitable substitute. Four graduated cowbells, lengths of pipe, or automobile brake drums would also be acceptable substitutes.

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AFRICAN WELCOME PIECE

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Conductor Score

MICHAEL UDOW
Edited by
Fred A. Wickstrom

Con Moto (♩ = circa 100) 3 Spagane

1. *mf*

2. *mf*

3. *mf*

4. *mf*

5. *mf*

6. *mf*

7. Bull Roarers *f*

8. *f*

9. *f*

10. *f*

11. *f*

12. *f*