





### **Wajjo Drummers**

Arthur Bollo-Kamara, Stennei Noel,  
Robert Kpogo, Obai Bollo-Kamara, Tony Bernard

### **Kekeli Dancers**

Alberta Taiwah, Joanna Kahlima, Emili Kahlima, Suad Abdi

**Special Guests:** Dave Trew, Cuthbert Maziwa, Yonnette Williamson

**Bollo-Kamara** was born in Sierra Leone, West Africa. His father was a temne Anglican priest while his mother was a descendant of freed slaves brought to Freetown. Moving with his parents to different mission stations, Bollo grew up listening and drumming to a variety of traditional and Western rhythms. In 1975, Bollo came to Edmonton where he continued his love for, and involvement with, traditional African drumming and dance.

In 1978, Bollo met fellow drummer Stennei Noel. Born in Trinidad, Stennei learned how to drum by playing with his uncle in Shungo festivals (festivals which originated in West Africa). Together, Bollo and Stennei have created their own musical crossings; the result of which led to the formation of **Wajjo Drummers**. Since their first presentation in 1990, Wajjo has had a number of performances throughout Western Canada. Some of these performances have included the Harrison Festival of the Arts, the Mission

Festival, the Fringe Festival, Africa Day, Heritage Day, Canada Day, Carifest, and the North Country Fair. The group has also performed for charitable organizations, as well as different nursing homes and schools.

The word "Wajjo" means let's dance in the Yoruba language. Coming from different parts of Africa and the Caribbean, members of Wajjo and Kekeli grew up learning, playing and dancing to traditional rhythms. These drummers and dancers have been performing for six years. Their mission is to preserve the authenticity of ancient African folklore, while presenting it as a living art to today's audience.

This evening you will experience drum calls, tribal dances and songs, transformed African-Caribbean drumming and chants, and contemporary urban African music. Finally, an ancient European instrument will join ancient African instruments for a finale you won't soon forget!

## Program Information

Tonight's concert will begin with a demonstration of the many traditional styles found throughout West Africa. Using a number of instruments from different parts of the country, Wajjo will illustrate how specific performing techniques are used to create numerous stylistic nuances. Through these nuances you will hear the complexity and variety of musical styles found within West Africa alone.

The next part of the concert involves the musical crossings from West Africa to North America, South America, and the Caribbean. All of these areas have played a large role in the sharing and creation of post-slavery styles. Here Wajjo and the Kekeli dancers will focus on Caribbean drumming and dancing (such as Samba and Calypso).

Additionally, they will show how these styles influenced West African music when slaves returned to their home countries. A good example of this can be seen in Freetown where many freed slaves would live. This made Freetown a Euro-African American nexus. The men and women who lived here originated from many different African groups, and spoke different languages. This made communication difficult so they began to speak African/English Krio (similar to the Creole developed in the West Indies). Not surprisingly, Freetown dominant Krio culture developed urban music styles with obvious trans-Atlantic links. Bollo and Stennei are living examples of these continued musical crossings.

Following a short intermission, Wajjo will bring the musical crossing a little closer to

home. Through their performance, they will address the question: How does the "Canadian context" affect our musical style? The opportunity to meet and perform with other Canadians who wish to preserve the sounds of their past allows Wajjo to create new musical alliances, which in turn leads to new and exciting sounds from all those involved. Bollo would like to welcome his special guests for this evening who will be incorporating their own styles with that of Wajjo's. This musical montage will be your opportunity to join with the performers in anticipating what the next millennium might bring for the "Wajjo sound."

So sit back and enjoy as Wajjo drummers and the Kekeli dancers take you on a journey through their West African musical crossings!



If you are interested in "getting a little closer" to West African music you can visit the Centre for

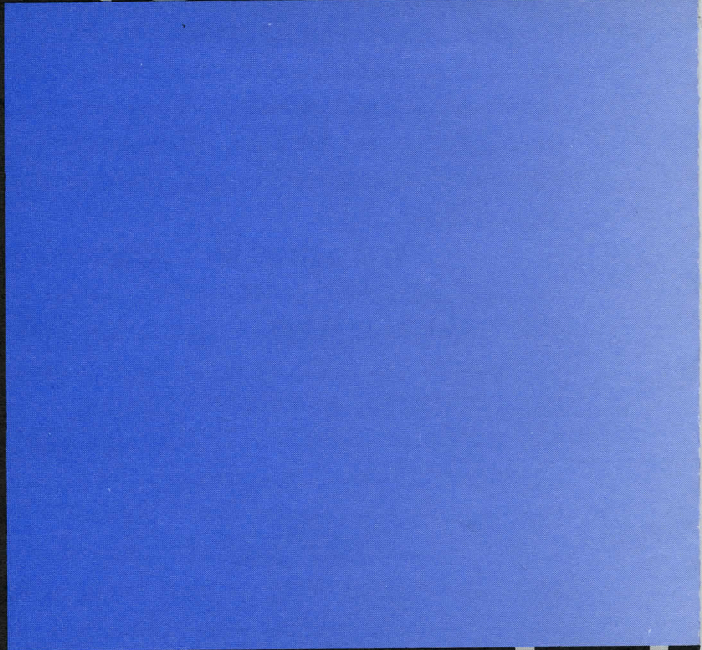
Ethnomusicology (located in room 2-13 of the Fine Arts Building). Bollo has generously loaned the Centre a number of his instruments, recordings, and videos for the next couple of weeks.

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