

# West African Rhythms for Drumset

by Royal Hartigan  
with Abraham Adzenyah and Freeman Donkor



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# CD TRACKING

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Produced by Dan Thress

## TRACK

1	SIKYI-ENSEMBLE	2:56
2	SIKYI-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 7	1:08
3	SIKYI-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 8	1:20
4	SIKYI-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 11	:49
5	SIKYI-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 22	:41
6	SIKYI-STICK/BRUSH EXAMPLE 1	1:12
7	SIKYI-HAND EXAMPLE 3	3:02
8	ADOWA ENSEMBLE	4:18
9	ADOWA-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 12	1:20
10	ADOWA-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 14	1:04
11	ADOWA-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 19	:54
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14	ADOWA-ASAADVA EXAMPLES 1 AND 2	1:36
15	ADOWA-KETE EXAMPLE 2	1:13
16	ADOWA-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 25	1:49
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18	ADOWA-HAND EXAMPLE 3	1:47
19	GAHV ENSEMBLE	3:00
20	GAHV-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 3	:57
21	GAHV-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 4	:45
22	GAHV-DRUMSET EXAMPLES 5 AND 6	1:38
23	GAHV-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 11	:55
24	GAHV-HIGHLIFE EXAMPLE 8	1:06
25	GAHV-BRUSH EXAMPLE 2	1:30
26	GAHV-HAND EXAMPLES 3 AND 4	1:51
27	AKOM ENSEMBLE	4:22
28	AKOM-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 3	1:07
29	AKOM-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 7	:41
30	AKOM-DRUMSET EXAMPLE 9	:46
31	AKOM-SECOND STYLE EXAMPLE 2	:34
32	AKOM-SECOND STYLE EXAMPLE 3	:42
33	AKOM-SHIFTED BELL PATTERN FIRST STYLE	1:00
34	AKOM-SHIFTED BELL PATTERN SECOND STYLE	:49
35	AKOM-HIGHLIFE JAZZ EXAMPLE 2	:56
36	AKOM-BRUSH EXAMPLE 2	:44
37	AKOM-HAND EXAMPLE	1:00
38	AKOM ENSEMBLE WITH DRUMSET	3:09



## KEY

Diagram illustrating the key for drum notation:

Ride Cymbal      RC Bell      Hi-Hat      Hi-Hat w/foot

Bass Drum      Snare Drum      High Tom      Low Tom      optional      muted

## INTRODUCTION

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# WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING: TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION

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GHANA, WEST AFRICA

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### AGBLO KONV

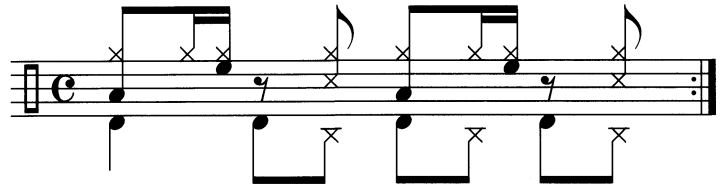
AMEZAGU FO TO AVOLELE.  
AMEZAGU GBLO MEXO WO.  
NADOM ABE AXO ENE.

THE ANCESTRAL DRUM STICK.  
I HAVE RECEIVED YOU.  
BE WITH ME AS PART OF MY WHOLE BODY.

—FREEMAN KWADZO DONKOR

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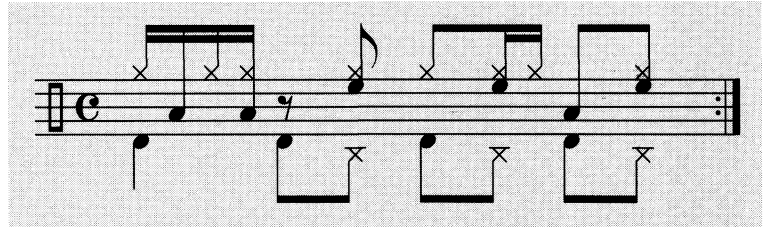
Finally, change the third stroke to a cross-stick on the snare.



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SIKYI DRUMSET EXAMPLE 7

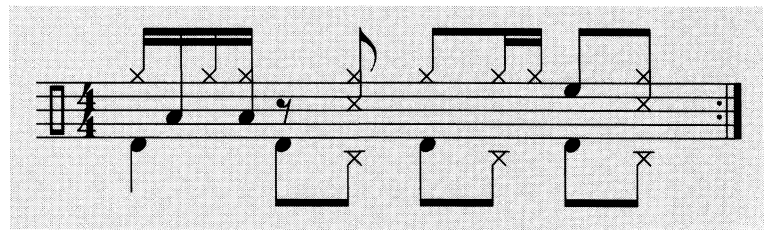
The medium-sized tamalin rhythm consists of three mute strokes that follow the timeline and three open tones. If you play this pattern between the toms, it can ignite a horn or guitar solo.



CD TRACK 3

SIKYI DRUMSET EXAMPLE 8

We can vary this rhythm by leaving out a stroke or changing the the high/low tone pattern in any number of ways. Accenting these strokes pushes the groove forward. Try the variations shown here, and create your own. The cross-sticks on the snare drum in this first example correspond to a Sikyi handclapping pattern.



As you play each style, note how the tamalin rhythm connects with the agyegyewa pattern on cymbal bell. This interlocking is characteristic of much Ghanaian and West African drumming; in fact, the whole ensemble of different rhythms can be thought of as forming a single composite heartbeat. As some have observed, this interlocking quality reflects the community-based Ghanaian way of life. Listen for it in each West African rhythm and drumset groove you play.



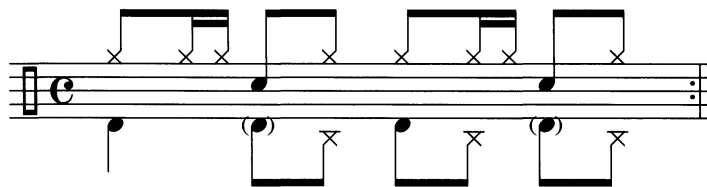
ALTERNATE LEFT HAND PATTERNS



# SIKYI WITH BACKBEATS

## SIKYI DRUMSET EXAMPLE 9

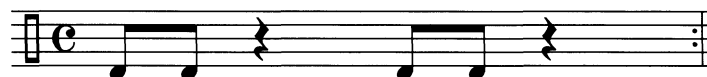
By playing the low tamalin open tones on the bass drum and mute tones on the snare, you can create a funk groove with backbeats filling in the agyegyewa-cymbal spaces. The frikiyiwa beat on the hi-hat suggests a double-time feel.



### BASS DRUM VARIATION 1

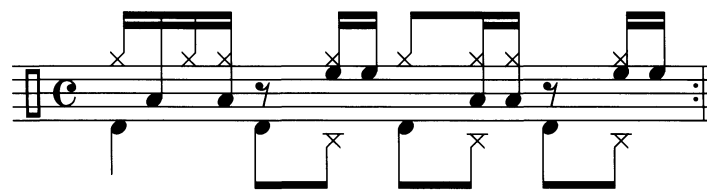


### BASS DRUM VARIATION 2



## SIKYI DRUMSET EXAMPLE 10

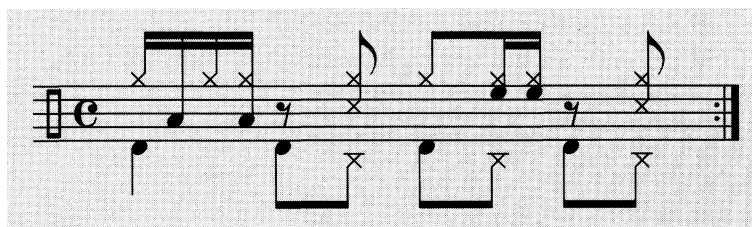
The apentemma rhythm consists of alternating mute and open stroke pairs. Three of these pairs reinforce the frikiyiwa timeline. Note that none of the strokes in this pattern follow the basic pulse; this off-beat emphasis is an essential aspect of West African drumming. First, divide the open and mute tones between the toms.



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4

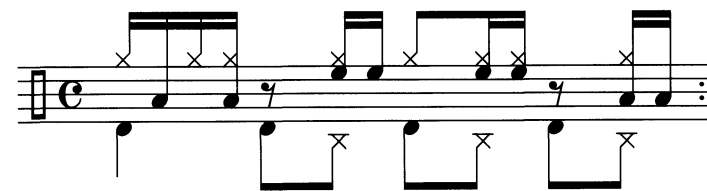
## SIKYI DRUMSET EXAMPLE 11

Next, substitute cross-sticks on the snare drum for apentemma mute strokes. Again, the cross-stick sharp sounds mimic hand clap patterns and drive the ensemble or soloist, especially at a fast tempo.



## SIKYI DRUMSET EXAMPLE 12

In Ghanaian drumming the master drum “speaks” to certain support drums. Their dialogue allows for rhythmic changes that reflect changes in the dance. In Sikyi this interaction occurs between oprenten and apentemma. Play the apentemma dialogue pattern between the toms and listen to the way a change in tone pattern from Drumset Example 10 results in a different rhythmic feel.



### ALTERNATE LEFT HAND PATTERN

