

CHAPTER 4

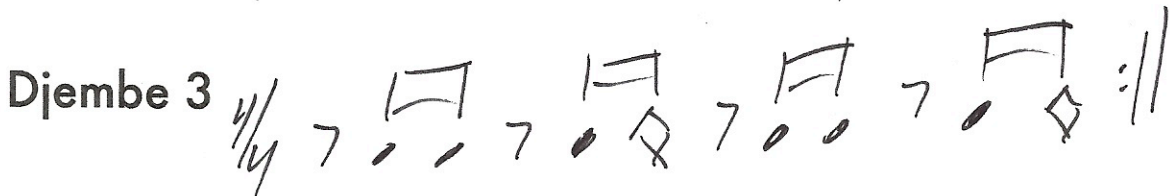
KASSA

Let me first say that this version of Kassa was taught to me by Amadou Joof, my Djembe teacher in The Gambia. It was taught to him by Famadou Konate's teacher. I believe his name was Karim Dolah. I am told this version comes from The Cassamance, a region in southern Senegal. These rhythms do travel around West Africa, and while doing so take on variations. Most likely you will find the roots of this rhythm in Guinea and Mali. I am also told it was a harvest dance/song... but now it is used at many occasions. Here is the call to Kassa.

Call

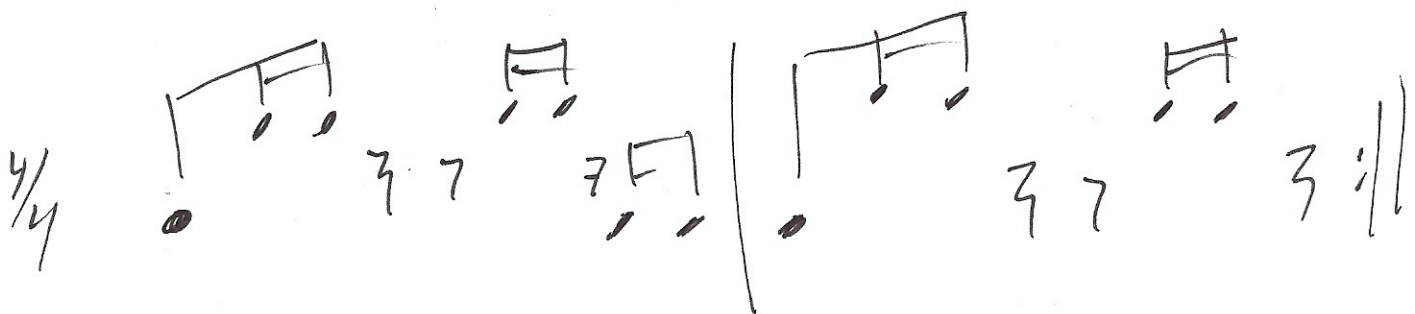


Now for the Djembe parts.



Next the Doun Doun parts.

Doun Doun



Bell $\frac{1}{x} \frac{1}{x} \frac{1}{x} \frac{7}{x} \frac{1}{x} \frac{1}{x} \dots$

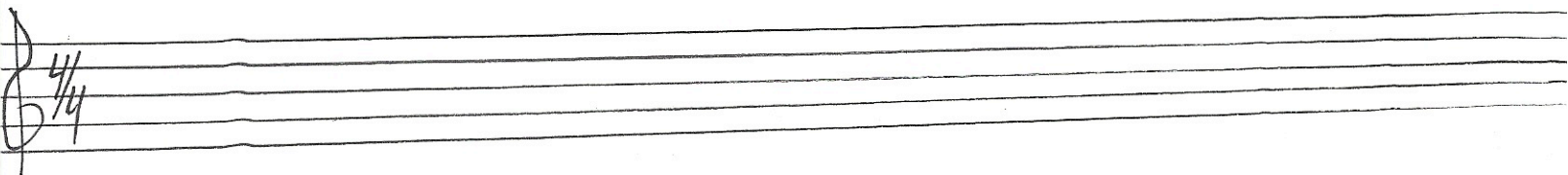
Next the words to Kassa.

Eela wooly woo konko daba, kondon teelu barama.
Eela wooly woo konko daba, kolon koma seneh kelalu
barama.

"Wake up farmer, the meal has arrived.
Wake up farmer, the meal is here."

Here is the melody notation for Kassa.

MELODY NOTATION



CHAPTER 5

12/8 RHYTHMS

We have learned 3 Djembe rhythms/ songs in 4/4. Now it's time to get into the 12/8 rhythms. These rhythms really start to show the polyrhythmic and secondary pulse, and we start to travel even further away from the way our Western ears work. Let's start with the ever popular Yankadi.

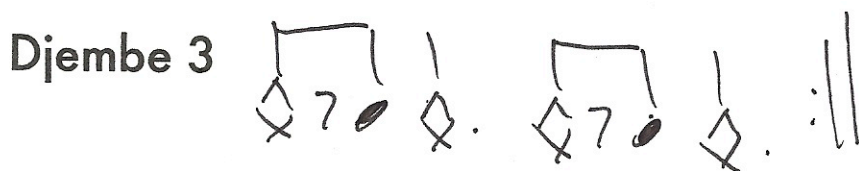
YANKADI

Yankadi is one of the most popular Djembe rhythms. Notice how it 'swings'. It is usually played with another rhythm called Macuru. Yankadi is a dance/ song of seduction and is fairly slow. Macuru is much faster. Many cultures have dances to attract the opposite sex. It's a biological thing we see in many species! Check out the call for Yankadi below. Notice how it is much more involved than our previous calls.

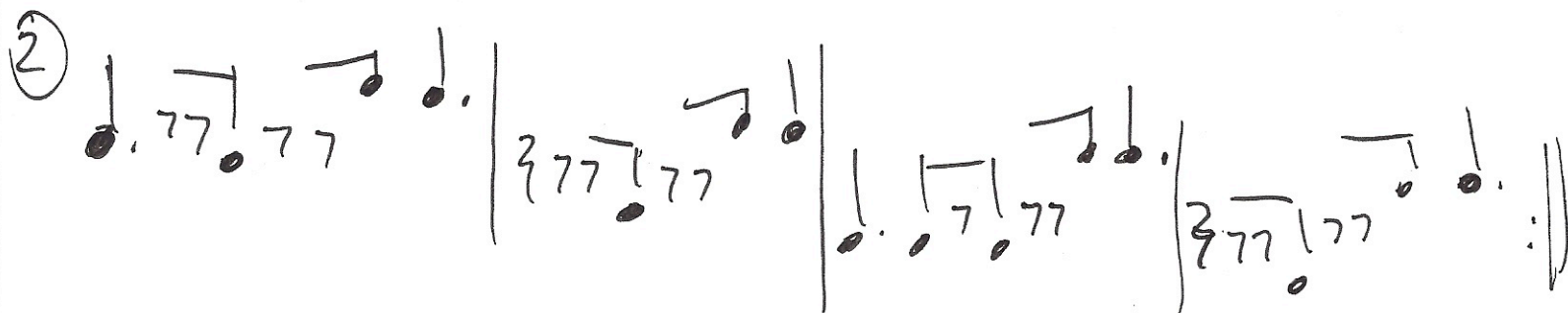
◇ = MUFFLED SLAP



And the Djembe parts...



Down Down parts



If you investigate the words to Yankadi, you will come up with many different songs. Once again it is not uncommon for words to change due to Tribe, language, region, teacher, etc. We will use a song I learned in Gambia called Banee Lay. It is about a woman named Banee. It is in the Mandinka language. Here are the words.

A { Banee lay... Banee lay,
 Sonko Maneh konko man,
 Manee dee ah tah.

"Where is Banee, where is Banee?
 I love her, she is so sweet."

B { Saliah Modou felam bee dee ya,
 Waliyah Modou felam bee dee ya,

"I swear I love her,
 God knows I love her",

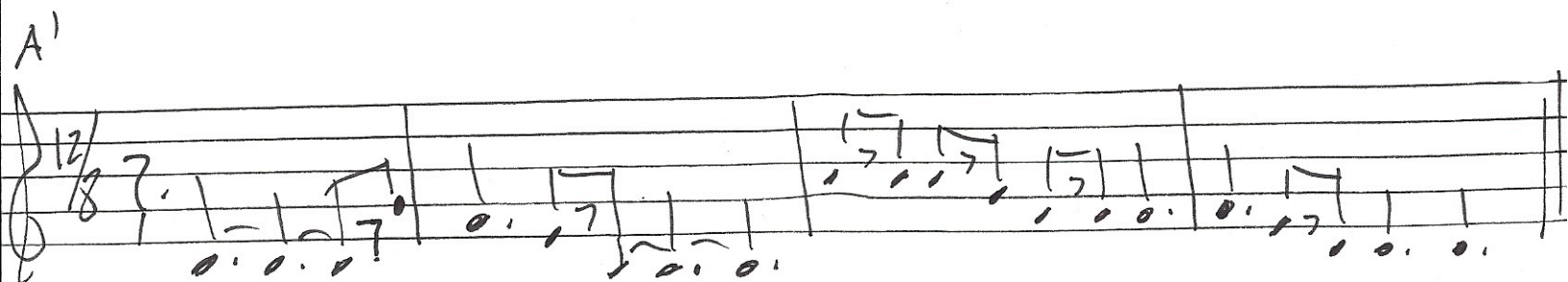
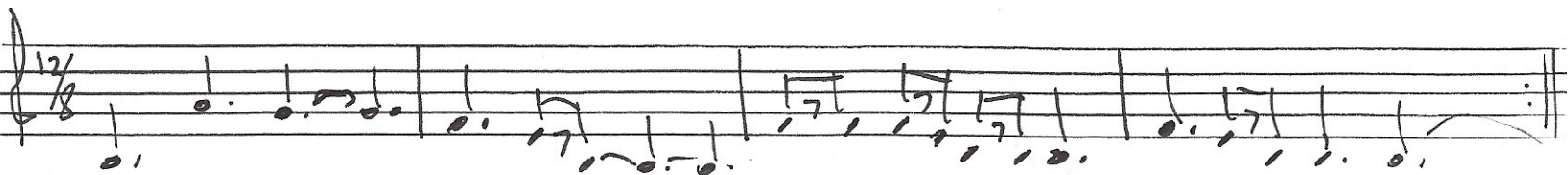
A' { Ahhhhh... ee Banee lay,

A' { Sonko Maneh konko man,
Manee dee ya tah.

" Where is Banee ? She is so sweet."

Here is the melody notation for Banee lay.

A MELODY NOTATION



INTRODUCTION TO YANKADI

In many Djembe ensembles introductions, unison patterns, and call and response really spice up the sensory experience. So we have a nice Intro for Yankadi we are going to learn. Here it is... it starts with the 'call' and goes right into the Intro. Notice it is played twice. Also important... we will use this Intro to end the Djembe ensemble too.

Lead Djembe

Play 'call' into: $12/8$ \triangle . 3. 3. 3. | $\overline{77}$ \triangle $\overline{77}$ \triangle $\overline{77}$ \triangle | 3. 3. 3. 3. |

$\overline{77}$ $\overline{77}$ $\overline{77}$ $\overline{77}$ \triangle || 2 Times ... into Rhythm...

Also notice where the Downs and the accompaniment Djembes come in...

$12/8$ \bullet . 3. 3. 3. | $\overline{77}$ \bullet $\overline{77}$ \bullet $\overline{77}$ \bullet | 3. 3. 3. 3. | 3. 3. 3. $\overline{77}$ \bullet || 2 Times

THE 'ROLL'

We've heard the term Roll in drumming many times. In Djembe... when the dancer is coming to the end of there dance... or when the song is coming to an end... the lead drummer starts with a roll that is either triplet based or a stricter eighth/ 2 sixteenths feel. This leads into the call. After the call the song might end or possibly go through the same as the Intro or maybe the Intro 'extended'. However it is ... it is worked out by the group and all the musicians and dancers understand the form of the song... at least in a well rehearsed group. Hey... music is the same everywhere in that you have good bands, not so good bands, incredible bands, etc. Traditionally when these songs are played at ceremonies they are played a fairly long time, sometimes an extremely long time ! Endurance is a huge factor in a lot of this drumming.

There is a myth... or I should say fallacy about West Africans and drumming. Some think all West Africans are good drummers. This of course is not true. What is true is that music plays a very important role in West African life, and exposure to this music starts in the womb.

CHAPTER 6

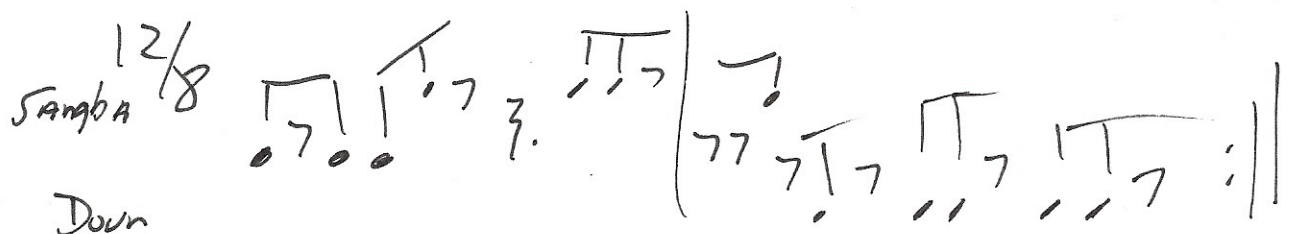
TOMANKA

Tomanka is a rhythm taught to me by Amadou 'Boss' Joof in The Gambia. It is for the fisherman's dance.



Here is the Down Down part

DOWN DOWN



12/8 ... WHY IS IT SO COOL ?

Okay lets think about this first from a fraction point of view. 12 over 8, 12 eighth notes, 4 groups of 3, 3 groups of 4, 2 groups of 6, 6 groups of 2... all these possibilities of feeling the beat differently. Now remember, West Africans did not compose this music using notation, nor were they organizing these rhythms in such a way as to play with fractions. No... this music was formed by the ear and having a primary pulse with 1, 2, or 3 secondary pulses makes for a full body danceable listening experience. The primary purpose of this music is to make you move and feel as well as think ! I heard it said by one of my teachers once " here in West Africa we have different birds than you. Different daily sounds... like the pounding of the pestle. Some say that Wolof Sabar drumming comes from those sounds. Why would our music sound like yours ? This is Mama Africa."

Of all our time signatures, 12/8 provides us with the most secondary pulses. One very important

aspect of music is feeling all the notes and subdivisions, whether we play them or not, they have to be felt in order to keep solid tempo and play syncopated rhythms. I like to think of each measure of $12/8$ as 4 groups of 3, and just some notes you don't play. This leads us to a great exercise. First take a measure of 4 groups of 3... i.e. triplets... then randomly extract a few notes. Now play the rhythm. Then stretch that exercise out to 2 measures, then 4, and so on. You will soon see how these rhythmic possibilities will contribute to a much better understanding of rhythm, tempo, subdivision and phrasing. Soon you will start to feel this West African music!

12/8 EXERCISES

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

