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"Rwanda is a small country, but one with a thousand rhythms," Jean Paul Samputu told students in Sears Recital Hall Wednesday afternoon.

Students across campus are having a chance to hear some of those rhythms during Samputu's visit to UD as headliner of Human Rights Week and the first World Rhythms Fellow. It's a busy week. He's giving lectures and workshops and visiting numerous UD classes to speak on topics including African history, religion, justice, peace studies, world music and human rights. He is joined on campus by two members of his band, Ingeli.

During Wednesday's lecture, he demonstrated several traditional Rwandan instruments, including the umuduri, which is made up of a resonating gourd and a string tied to a long, flexible stick. It doesn't look like much, but when Jacques, one of the members of Ingeli, started playing and Samputu and Ingeli member Julius stood at his sides singing, the three made sounds that filled the hall and brought loud applause. Before Jacques also demonstrated a horn, Samputu lamented that he had not brought a traditional 12-string instrument similar to a guitar.

"They won't always let you bring that on the plane," he explained.

They saved the drums for last, pounding out rhythms in a style common in Burundi, Rwanda's neighbor.

Samputu, winner of the 2003 Kora Award, often called the "African Grammy," is internationally known for his mastery of many music styles including soukous, rumba, vodou, traditional Rwandan 5/8, Afrobeat, Pygmy and gospel. His visit has brought not just new music but also a new voice to campus, one committed to reconciliation and human rights. He was away in Uganda when the Rwanda's genocide began in April 1994, he told students in a lecture on reconciliation Monday afternoon. When he returned home in July, he learned that his parents, three brothers and a sister had all been killed by neighbors. He eventually found solace through the help of a pastor.

"This man was sent by God. God was telling me, "You must forgive those who killed your family. When you forgive them, God will forgive you," he said.

"I have forgiven, and I am teaching Rwandans about forgiveness through my music."

Students had a variety of questions for Samputu on a range of topics. How many languages does he sing in? Six: Kinyarwanda, Swahili, Lingala, Luganda, French and English.

When did he start to sing? "At birth. My mother told me, "You didn't cry. You sang."

How do children respond to his message? "Reconciliation is a painful process. People are forgiving others."

He took all of these questions and more, and then as Arts Series coordinator Eileen Carr pointed at her watch from the back of the room to let him know his scheduled time was ending, he pointed to his guitar case on the floor.

"Thank you," he said. "I think my guitar is asking a question."

With that, he played once more.