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NEWS RELEASE

UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON MUSIC DEPARTMENT HOSTS AFRICAN DRUMMERS; ARTISTS TO TEACH DRUMMING, DANCING WORKSHOPS OPEN TO PUBLIC

DAYTON, Ohio — African artist Jerry Kwashie Dzokoto is teaching University of Dayton students how to make drums talk.

On a recent evening, Jerry Kwashie Dzokoto sat in a circle with about 20 students, demonstrating how to play a drum with different parts of the palm to create different sounds.

“Drumming is not something we do for fun in Ghana,” said Dzokoto who, along with his nephew, Sena Abraham Dzokoto, is spending UD’s fall semester showcasing his craft throughout greater Dayton. “We do communicate with the drums — we speak of our traditions, we tell our stories.”

Beginning Sept. 24, the Dzokotos — experts in various dance and drumming traditions from throughout Ghana, West Africa — will teach drumming and dancing workshops, which will be open to the public:

- An African drumming class will meet from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesdays. Two sessions will be held: the first on Wednesday evenings from Sept. 24 through Oct. 22 and the second on Wednesday evenings from Oct. 29 through Dec. 3, with no class Nov. 26.

Participants will learn African drumming techniques while playing carved drums. No prior experience is necessary, and the class will be appropriate for beginning and experienced drummers.

Both sessions will be held in room 104 of the Music-Theatre building on UD’s campus. The cost for each session is \$50.

- An African dance class will meet from 7-9 p.m. on Thursdays Sept. 25 through Dec. 4.

Participants will learn dances from various ethnic groups in Ghana, and the class will be appropriate for all ages and skill levels. On Dec. 6, participants will perform in concert with the University of Dayton Ebony Heritage Singers, who perform African American sacred music.

The dance class will meet in room 120 of the Music-Theatre building on UD’s campus. The cost for the class is \$75.

To register for the classes, contact UD’s Office of Special Programs and Continuing Education at 229-2347. There is no deadline for registration.

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Music faculty and students traveled to Ghana last summer and were taught by the Dzikotos, Donna Cox, chair of the UD department of music, said. That interaction led to the duo's visit to the University, she added.

"We were impressed with how intuitive they were," Cox said of the drummers. "We learn things differently from our Western perspective. I wanted my students to be taught something that forced them out of their comfort zones."

Jerry Kwashie Dzikoto teaches drumming and dance throughout Ghana at such spots as the Center for National Culture in Winneba, the Ghana Education Service and the Fanida Day Care Center. He is the chief drummer with the Dekornu and Afrique Dance Ensemble, traveling throughout Ghana performing for and teaching tourists.

Sena Abraham Dzikoto teaches African music and dance at the Academy of African Music and Arts of Kokrobite and at several other schools, in addition to repairing drums. He is a founding member of the Dekornu Dance group and performs throughout Ghana.

In addition to the workshops, the Dzikotos will teach portions of UD courses, such as a world music class. They also will interact with UD students studying a variety of fields, from those majoring in music therapy to those taking classes in the University's core curriculum.

Plans also call for the Dzikotos to work with Dayton-area schools, such as the Omega School of Excellence, the Miami Valley School and the Dayton Early College Academy, a new school in its first year currently housed on the UD campus. They'll also perform at various events, including the "READING, Rhythm and Rhyme" festival to be held on campus Oct. 4.

The drummers will be in Dayton through Dec. 19 and are staying in the homes of Cox and UD music professor Mark Brill. The trip is their first to the United States, and Jerry Kwashie Dzikoto said they've also been busy trying new foods and visiting places not found in Ghana, such as King's Island (where Jerry said they marveled over — and rode — all the roller coasters).

"Part of the premise for this program is that there would be a two-way cultural exploration," Cox said. "We're hoping to have opportunities where people are engaged in conversations about what it means to live in another culture."

Culture Works, a Dayton-based organization that supports the arts, helped fund the exchange program, along with several UD sources, such as the Community for Diversity on Campus, College of Arts and Sciences, Africana studies minor, the music and theater departments, and various endowed chairs.

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For media interviews, contact **Donna Cox** at (937) 229-3936 or via e-mail at donna.cox@notes.udayton.edu. Contact **Jerry Kwashie Dzikoto** and **Sena Abraham Dzikoto** (pronounced "joh-ko-toe") through Mark Brill's office at 229-3915 or via e-mail at jerrydzikoto@hotmail.com or dzokotosena@hotmail.com.