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Projects, Bands, Collectives

The Bele Bele Rhythm Collective, Founder and Director 2008 – present
The Bele Bele Rhythm Collective is an intergenerational group of women from DC & surrounding areas who have come together to form a sisterhood of the drum. My role as director is to create and arrange music; teach said music to women, along with West African drumming techniques; pursue opportunities to perform and promote the group to the public; and lead weekly rehearsals and regular performances.

Akoma Drummers, co-Founder 2010 – present
The Akoma Drummers proudly study and present music of the African diaspora - the origin of all people and all music - ranging from traditional West African to funk and DC's own go-go. The group plays djembe, kpanlogo, conga and dunun drums with dancing and songs.

Young Women's Drumming Empowerment Project, Founder and Director, Lead instructor in West African percussion and song 2005 – present
Young women perform drumming, poetry, movement and song to empower themselves.

The Afro-Blue Collective 2006 – 2009
African fused with jazz, featuring upright bass, piano and percussion, led by Lady Dane Edidi

BUMBADA! Women Drumming (Baltimore, MD) 2005 – 2009
All-women's West African drum ensemble led by Tammi Hessen

Rhythm Workers Union, co-founder 2001 – 2009
Activist rhythm ensemble, renown for showing up at large demonstrations with a moving drum cart called the "MotherDrumShip."

OmegaBand 2007 – 2010
DC Funk band featuring original songs spanning funk, soul, ska and rock, led by Erika Betts

World Beat Ensemble, Founder and Director 2007 – 2008
West African drum trio: Henry Moses III, Mark Nickens and myself

American Balalaika Symphony 2004 – 2006
Russian symphony orchestra based in Arlington, VA (oboe)

Capital City Samba 2005 – 2006
Group of percussionists who studied the traditional Samba music of Brazil, led by Ken Lewis

Malcolm X Drummers and Dancers 2000 – 2002
30-year-old loosely formed ensemble of drummers and dancers who play at DC's famous Sunday drum circle in Malcolm X Park, and perform at events on request

Notable performance venues:

The National Cathedral (BBRC)
Merriweather Post Pavilion (BBRC)
The Hamilton (BBRC)
NPR Studios (BBRC)
Gypsy Sally's (BBRC)
The Birchmere, Alexandria, VA (BBRC)

Virginia Women's Music Festival, Charlottesville (BBRC)
 The State Theatre, Falls Church, VA (Akoma Drummers)
 The National Portrait Gallery (YWDEP)
 The Smithsonian Museum of African Art (YWDEP)
 The Kennedy Center (YWDEP)

Recordings

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| Bele Bele Rhythm Collective, "Roots" lead djembe and vocals, arrangements and rhythm creation | 2017 |
| Sweet Honey in the Rock, "#LoveinEvolution" djembe solo on track "sweet sweet honey" | 2016 |
| Kent Heckaman, "Sonnet Cottage" Percussion | 2011 |
| Imani White, "They Dreamt of Us" Percussion, vocals | 2005-2009 |
| OmegaBand, In Through the Navel, Percussion | 2009 |
| Shahid Buttar, Get Out of Your Chair, Drum, vocal, flute, oboe, vocal arrangement | 2006 |
| Jeff Mueller & Kristen Arant, Brilliant Blue Oboe & English Horn | 1997 |

Honors

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| Received new pop up store space (Rhode Island Ave) from Recreative Spaces | 2016 |
| Received 5,000 grant and 3-month pop store (Ivy City) from Cultural DC | 2015 |
| Received Rex Foundation Award (\$5,000) for YWDEP | 2012 |
| Received Common Folk Award from One Common Unity | 2010 |
| Certified by the Maryland Teaching Artist Institute | 2010 |
| Apprentice to master drummer Ubaka Hill – Michigan Women's Music Festival | 2008 |
| Awarded Artist Fellowship (DCCAHA) | 2008, '10, '12 |
| Folk & Traditional Arts Mini-Grant Recipient (DCCAHA) | 2006, '07, '08 |
| Small Projects Grant Recipient (DCCAHA) | 2006, '07, '08 |
| Young Artist Community Services Program Grant Recipient (DCCAHA) | 2005 & 2006 |

Drumming Empowerment Programs

Led a series of classes or workshops at the following locations between 2006 and 2017:

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| F.H. Fauntroy Community Center | 2017-present |
| Chance Academy | 2017 |
| DC Prep Academy | 2017 |
| Yu Ying PCS | 2017 |
| Inspired Teaching School | 2017 |
| Jack & Jill Playgroups | 2017 |
| Little Friends for Peace | 2016 |
| DC General Family Shelter | 2016 |
| Capital City Charter School | 2016 |
| Melvin J. Berman Academy | 2015 |
| All Souls Unitarian Church (director of congregational drum ensemble) | 2014-present |
| Washington Waldorf School, Bethesda, MD (high school faculty) | 2014-present |

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| Paul Public Charter School, Washington, DC | 2014 |
| GALA Hispanic Theatre summer camp, Washington, DC | 2014 |
| Mt Vernon Community School, Alexandria, VA | 2013 |
| Sheridan School, Washington, DC | 2013-2015 |
| Evergreen Montessori School, Silver Spring, MD | 2012-2014 |
| Harriet Tubman Elementary School, Washington, DC | 2012-2013 |
| Center City Charter School, Washington, DC | 2012-2013 |
| American University | 2014-present |
| University of Maryland | 2013-present |
| Rayner Browne Academy, Baltimore, MD | 2011-2012 |
| Hart Middle School, Washington, DC | 2011-2012 |
| DC Scores, Washington, DC | 2011 |
| Tench Tilghman Elementary Middle School, Baltimore, MD | 2010-2012 |
| Takoma Education Center, Takoma, DC | 2010 |
| Beacon House, Washington, DC | 2010 |
| Girl Scouts, Stone Mill Elementary, Potomac, MD | 2010 |
| PULSE Performing Arts Project, Kilmer Middle School, Vienna, VA | 2010 |
| Imagine Hope Community Charter School, Washington, DC | 2010 |
| Kipp DC PCS, Washington, DC | 2010 |
| National Cultural Center, Accra, Ghana, West Africa | 2010 |
| Capitol Hill Day School, Washington, DC | 2009 |
| Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS, Washington, DC | 2009 |
| Lifepieces to Masterpieces, Washington, DC | 2009 |
| Levine School of Music, Washington, DC | 2009 |
| Anne Arundel Community College (adjunct faculty), Annapolis, MD | 2008-2012 |
| Freedom Schools Academy, Knoxville, TN | 2008-2010 |
| Passion 4 Learning, Strathmore Elementary School, Rockville, MD | 2008-2009 |
| MEI Futures Academy PCS, NE Washington, DC | 2008-2009 |
| Girls, Inc., Trinidad Recreation Center, NE Washington, DC | 2008 |
| Revel Youth Shine, Browne Junior High School, NE Washington, DC | 2008 |
| Rock Creek Valley Elementary School, Rockville, MD | 2008 |
| Latin American Youth Center's Multicultural Summer Youth Program, DC | 2007-2008 |
| Piney Branch Elementary School, Takoma Park, MD | 2007 |
| African Immigrants and Refugees Foundation/Cardozo High School, DC | 2007 |
| Sasha Bruce Youthwork's Project HYPE, Washington, DC | 2007 |
| COEUS International School, Washington, DC | 2007-2008 |
| Sasha Bruce Summer Enrichment Program, Washington, DC | 2006-2009 |
| Cesar Chavez Charter School for Public Policy, Washington, DC | 2006 |
| Capitol City Charter School, Washington, DC | 2006 |
| Catholic University, Washington, DC | 2006 |
| Wells College, Aurora, NY | 2006 |

Teaching:

DrumLady.com 2006 – present
 Teach and facilitate private and group drumming workshops for groups of women and girls, as well as mixed groups of children, youth, adults and elders at private homes, schools, youth centers, businesses, conferences and organizations throughout the DC metro area and the mid-Atlantic region. Includes weekly classes of ~15 students; Classes of 100 students at the Southeast Women's Herbal Conference; and large hands-on demonstrations at American University and the University of Maryland.

Young Women's Drumming Empowerment Project 2005 – present
 The Young Women's Drumming Empowerment Project (YWDEP) gives rise to young women's self esteem, positive development, and creative self-expression through drumming, poetry, movement, song, and performance.

As the Executive Director my duties include:

- o Program Design, Implementation and assessment
- o Management of program staff, interns and apprentices
- o Writing/co-writing grant proposals
- o Performing and/or delegating outreach and publicity tasks
- o Designing and teaching drumming curriculum
- o Serving ex-officio on the YWDEP Board of Directors
- o Artistic direction
- o Other tasks as needed

Panorama: A D.C. Community Arts Initiative 2003 - 2006
Taught and facilitated hand drumming to elderly, adult, and youth beginners.

Rhythm Workers Union (co-founder, 2001) and Guerrilla Poetry Insurgency 2002 – 2006
Taught hand drumming and percussion, along with the principles of musicality to new members.
Led hundreds of performances, primarily at protest marches, rallies, fundraisers and other gatherings of activists.

Education

Truman State University, Kirksville, MO 1993-1995
oboe performance major

University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 1995-1999
Bachelor of Arts-Music
Interdisciplinary Studies (English, journalism, women studies)

Continuing Education

Teaching Artist Institute Seminar I: Bringing Your Art into the Classroom 2009

Children & Youth Investment Trust Corporation 30-hour Training:
"Advancing Youth Development," (Washington, DC) 2008

Private Study:

Traditional Kpanlogo and xylophone lessons (Arts Center, Accra, Ghana) 2010, 2011

Mahiri Keita, advanced Malinke drum technique 2009

Jason Walker, individual Latin Conga lessons 2008

Baile McKnight of Balie's African Drum Works, individual djembe lessons 2006-2007

Tammi Hessen (student of Mamady Keita of the Tam Tam Mandingue), private
djembe lessons 2005

Professional Oboists (St. Louis & Columbia, MO), classical oboe lessons 1986-1999

Group Study:

Group study with drum master Afia Walking Tree 2017

Group study with Malinke drum master Monette Marino 2015, 2016

Group study with Dr. Djo Bi, Ivory Coast drum master 2015

Individual and group study with multiple masters in Ghana, West Africa 2011, 2014

Mini-Guinea 2-week West African Drumming Intensive w/ Mamady Keita
and Famadou Konate (San Diego, CA) 2011

Advanced level djembe workshops with Mamady Keita (Baltimore, MD) 2009

Mini-Guinea 2-week West African drumming intensive with Mamady Keita 2008

(San Diego, CA) 2008

2nd Annual Drum Circle Facilitators Conference Drum Circle Facilitation (NC) 2007

Mahiri Keita of Tam Tam Mandingue West African Drumming School (MD) 2006-2008

Edwina Lee Tyler and Ubaka Hill West African drumming (Woodstock, NY) 2005

Tammi Hessen West African Mandingue drumming (Takoma Park, MD) 2005

Mamady Keita West African drumming workshop (Mt. Rainier, MD) 2005