

Mp3 Nyanyo Addo - The Tranceformer



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African percussion music, ritual trance meets modern dancefloor 15 MP3 Songs

WORLD: African, WORLD: World Beat Details: Nyanyo Addo - The Drummer as a boy - It was in the small Ga - community Labadi in the Greater Accra Region in Ghana, Westafrica, that Nyanyo Addo was born into a family, where music and dance is naturally integrated into daily life. Traditionally the drum plays an important role in the healing ceremonies of the Ga - people: The calling of the drum is the main reason why people fall into trance. Raised by his grandfather - a well-respected Won or priest - Addo learned to play the drum at an early age. In Ghanaean culture the Won is involved with his people in a very direct fashion: He is not only a spiritual and religious leader, but often acts as a doctor, lawyer and community leader, prescribing herbal medicines and settling land disputes. This implies a great responsibility which was given to Nyanyo Addo from his grandfather. But drumming is also part of the daily life in Ghana, messages were transmitted over long distances with the help of big drums and they still accompany weddings and funerals. Festivals are unimaginable without drumming and dancing. The art of drumming and drum-making has been developed to a high level. The position of the drummer is corresponding to the importance and variety of drums: The drummer is a well respected person who knows about history and culture. He gives inspiration to the people as well as to chiefs and kings. From early childhood on, Addo has learned to play the traditional drums of the Ga - people, for example the big standing drum Oblente, but also the Atumpani, the Gome-drum and the small talking drum Odonon: With one arm the pressure is varied to change the pitch of the drum, while the other hand uses a stick to beat it. The slightly bigger Blekete is a bass drum with one membrane at each side. The Ballaphone, a westafrican type of xylophone, is another instrument which Addo has learned to play with great ambition. Accompanying Fela Kuti, Mutabaruka and Mustapha Tettey Addy on their tours throughout Westafrica, Addo has become an

accomplished drummer. In 1986 he was invited by the German 'Institute for comparing musical studies' as a member of Aja Addy's band 'Tsuianaa', they also toured extensively across Europe until they played at the Olympic Games in Barcelona in 1992. Since the emergence of big techno and house raves in the beginning of the 90's, Nyanyo Addo's musical skills have also been used in a very different context: Together with the well-known house-DJ Ted Bowes he has developed a new style of live-jamming together with the electronical rhythms of the DJ. Addo symbolizes a new generation of drummers not only integrating their deep roots from a home far away, but also challenge the possibilities of modern technology.

The Drummer as a Trance-former

He 's in trance now: The first solo recording by Nyanyo Addo features music of the Tigari - festival which is held annually in Addo's home village. The Won comes to Labadi, where up to eight drummers take part in this special trance ceremony: A woman sings a welcome song and tells a story or parable of the Won religion. This is followed by a whirring sound as the drums begin to vibrate from the action of the drummers hands pounding on the drum. While the sound of the drums isn't very loud, the effect on the mind is very powerful . An important aspect of trance music is the ability of the rhythm to talk to the dancers, to initiate movements of dance. One dance is performed by a man and a woman, they dance in a ceremonial garment. The robes are wide and flowing to allow the garments to expand while they are spinning in circles. Another dance features a man dressed as a fisherman, wearing a large coconut leaf hat and carrying an oar while the woman is styled with stuffing to enhance the bodies' natural curves. The particular rhythm they dance to calls the animals and affects their behaviour. Different animals react to different drums: The bamboo flute calls the birds and the snakes, and the Oblenten forces the smaller animals to come out and jump and play. When in trance, the dancers speak special languages because different spirits speak through these people. These spirits transmit their strength and healing powers onto the people seeking help or cure for their problems and diseases. For instance, an ill man gets into trance. He lies down and places a stone on his stomach. A large stick is pounded on the stone by other participants. After the ceremony the man gets up and has recovered.

Asafojo is one of the rhythms which are used during these trance ceremonies. Other rhythms Addo uses here have a more secular background. Some of these rhythms are played in a family context, for meditations or parties. 'Wo Ba Wo Ba Shue' invites other drummers to join in, 'Womba Djo' implies an invitation to come and dance, especially with children. 'Otofo Yo' is part of an initiation ceremony for virgin women before they get married, and 'Kaa Ya Mo' is an advice for the children from their mother. 'Nagala

Djo' comes from the bolige tribe in the northern region of Ghana, while 'Pamplo Lala' simply means: "The flute is singing". 'Aklowa Ko Ye' points out the importance of your home village, which never let's you down, and 'Kpanlogo' features one of the major rhythms which originate in Ghana. Addo draws his compositions from a rich tradition of rhythms he learned when he was a boy, they live and grow with him wherever

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