

yet embrace the confidence to use one's voice in a solo. He is the son of Obo Addy and has toured extensively.

Eric Mensah Pappoe (dancer) come from Accra, Ghana where he had been performing with the National Dance Company of Ghana in 2004. He had the pleasure of performing in front of many heads of states, including President Clinton, Queen Elizabeth, and Tabo Nbeki, the President of South Africa. In 1996, Pappoe performed at the Olympic Games in Atlanta. He is also an acrobat and fire-eater who has been performing since the age of eight.

Richard Mensah Sokpor (dancer) joined Homowo and Obo in 2004 from Ghana. He started performing at age 18 and then went on to become a member of the National Dance Company of Ghana in 1994. His years with the National Dance Company allowed him to tour both nationally in Ghana and Internationally to England, Germany, France, Zimbabwe and more. Sokpor is Obo's grandson.

Mashud Neindow (drummer) joined Obo and Homowo from Accra, Ghana in September of 2005. A drummer since the age of six, Neindow was a member of the National Dance Company of Ghana for 13 years. He started building drums at the age of ten from his father and he continues to build donno drums when he not performing. He has toured all over the world. Highlights include the Africa Contemporary Festival in Nigeria, Expo 2000 in Germany, the 1996 US Olympic Games, and the Harare International Festival in Zimbabwe.

John Mensah Ekor (drummer and dancer) is the newest member of Okropong, having arrived in Portland in September of this year. He is a founding member of the Afrique Dance Ensemble in Ghana and was a member of the National Dance Company of Ghana. Ekor was a member of the Derkornu Dancers of Africa. He is a dynamic performer who has been dancing since he was a child in Ghana.

*Obo Addy: www.OboAddy.com
Homowo African Arts & Cultures: www.Homowo.org*

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UPCOMING WORLD MUSIC SERIES EVENTS

Friday Feb. 16, 2007 • 8 p.m., Beall Hall

KARTIK SESHADRI

Classical Music of North India

Saturday March 3, 2007 • 8 p.m., Beall Hall

MASTERS OF IRISH TRADITIONAL MUSIC

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107th Season, 5th program



SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

Beall Concert Hall
8:00 p.m.

Friday evening
October 6, 2006

THE WORLD MUSIC SERIES

presents

OBO ADDY'S OKROPONG

Music and Dance of Ghana

Co-sponsors:
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PROGRAM

Selections to be announced from the stage.

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HOMOWO AFRICAN ARTS & CULTURES

*Formed in 1986 under the visionary leadership of Obo Addy,
a master drummer of Ghana, and President Susan Addy.*

The dual mission—both artistic and community building—led Homowo to establish the Homowo Festival of African Arts in 1990-2004. The annual festival attracted seven thousand people to downtown Portland each summer in celebration of African culture. Our mission is to build cultural understanding between people of diverse origins through education and performance. Through our educational outreach programs and touring we reach over 30,000 children and an additional 25,000 adults each year.

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ABOUT TONIGHT'S ARTISTS

Obo Addy was born January 15, 1936 in Accra, Ghana, though at that time it was known as the Gold Coast and was a British colony. Addy was born to his mother, father, a Wonche priest—also known as a spiritual healer or medicine man- and over 50 siblings. He was constantly surrounded by the drumming, dancing, and singing that accompanied his father's work. His siblings and he listened, observed, and helped as needed when his father performed various spiritual ceremonies and rites. From these ceremonies he learned about the power of music, drumming, and rhythms. In rituals, he first learned to play bell. Later, he was allowed to play drums. In between these events and lessons with his father, he played on his own and with other musicians at social gatherings in town.

By the age of 6 Addy lived and breathed drumming. He went on to learn how to play all the drums of the Ga people and became a master drummer. Throughout his life he has been connected to the rhythm of his youth, his land, and his father.

In his teen years Addy became entranced by the big band sound. He expanded his love for music, and learned about the piano, trumpets, saxophone, and bass. He played in the clubs of Accra for the British army and politicians. In 1984, Addy would fall back in love with these sounds when he created *Kukurudu*, his African jazz band that plays Addy's composition that cross over to big band, ska, and jazz.

In the mid 1950's, Ghana became an independent nation. Addy lived through the transition of his homeland becoming a free nation. Through this new freedom he and two of his brothers were able to start traveling through Europe to play their music.

By the 1970's Addy had traveled throughout Europe, and even lived

for several years in England. In 1972, he performed at the Olympics in Munich and in 1974 he spent three months touring Aboriginal settlements in Australia.

By 1976, Addy was settled into the Pacific Northwest. He was first brought by the Cultural Enrichment Program of the Washington State Arts Commission to teach at the University of Washington in Seattle. He later made his way down to Portland where he has been based ever since.

In 1986 they started Homowo African Arts & Cultures. Through this organization Addy and his artists have been able to share the sounds and sight of Ghana with over 25,000 youth each year through school programming. He has been teaching at Lewis & Clark College of Portland for over 15 years.

Addy has also recorded the sounds of childhood in both traditional and contemporary music. His albums include: *Kpanlogo Party* (Tangent, 1973), *Obo* (Avocet, 1983), *Obo Addy/Kukurudu* (Avocet, 1984), *Born in the Tradition* (Santrofi, 1986), *Okropong* (Earth Beat! 1992), *Let Me Play My Drums* (Burnside, 1993), *The Rhythm Of Which A Chief Walks Gracefully* (Earth Beat! / 1994), *Wonche Bi* (Allegro-Alula 2001), and *Afiye Okropong* (Allegro-Alula-2003).

Addy helped create the Homowo Festival of African Arts from 1990–2004. He has collaborated and composed for Portland Taiko, Third Angle New Music Ensemble, and Kronos Quartet. His symphony “Cries of Our Mothers” was performed in 2005 by the Charleston Symphony Orchestra, the Portland Festival Symphony, and the Portland Youth Philharmonic.

In January of 2004, Addy was told that he had breast cancer. He went on to have surgery. Three weeks later he was out touring with his traditional group *Okropong* throughout the east coast. And even though Susan tried to force him to rest, the spirit of the music healed him both physically and emotionally. Addy has been cancer-free for two years.

Awards include: *Governors Award for the Arts in Oregon in 1993; Masters Fellowship from the Oregon Arts Commission; Masters Fellowship from the Regional Arts and Culture Council; the National Heritage Fellowship Award from the National Endowment for the Arts in 1996.*

Okropong, meaning “eagle” in Obo Addy's native Ga language, will take you on an acoustic journey thru the different landscapes of Ghana. Throughout the evening you will visit the various ethnic cultures in Ghana, including Ga, Ewe, Ashanti, Dagomba and Dagarti. Using a variety of hand and stick drums, talking drums, bells and shakers, the musicians build layers of driving rhythms while the dancers, clad in colorful West African garments, engage in an energetic physical “conversation” with the drummers. Do not be surprised if at the end of the concert you find yourself on your feet!

Alex Addy (drummer) comes from a line of drummers within the Addy family. Much of his youth was spent in Ghana where he was involved in drumming performances at his church before moving to Portland when he was 15. Since he joined Homowo African Arts & Cultures in 1992, his infectious energy has been an asset to the organization's Educational Programs. Addy teaches the five hand techniques of Ghanaian drumming and believes in students working together to create a strong communal rhythm,