

**Music in West Africa**  
By Ruth Stone

**Instructional Manual**  
By J. Bryan Burton

<u>Code</u>	<u>Level</u>
AA	All Ages
E	Elementary school (particularly grades 3-6)
S	Secondary (middle/high school)
C/U	Collegiate/University classes (including music and non-music majors)

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**Getting Started With the Study of Music in West Africa**

A number of overarching themes recur throughout Music in West Africa serving to organize knowledge about Kpelle music, in particular, and West African music, in general, through examination of examples and discussions of Kpelle music in this text. As identified by the author in Chapter VI, Cutting the Edge, these themes are:

1. Music is part of a bundle of performance that links music sounds to dance, instrument playing, and even speech in narration.
2. All people are expected to be minimally competent in music making, particularly in singing and dancing.
3. The instruments played by the Kpelle are extensions of their human performers. Instruments and humans have voices.
4. Performers in a broad range of musical events relate to one another in a part-counterpart arrangement.
5. The most valued form of performance among the Kpelle is hocket, or the combining of facets, where each player or singer contributes a short pattern that interlocks with the motifs of other performers.
6. Performers value the faceting of sound into small components that are then recombined. This faceting appears in singing, dancing, and song text alike.
7. Tone color or timbre is much noticed and admired in music.
8. Musicians create rhythms that are often asymmetrical and then interlock with other performers in a very precise way.
9. Key soloists are expected to improvise against the background of a rich and layered backdrop.
10. Continuity in music performance builds through the density of many discrete parts.
11. Parallels to these central themes abound in everyday Kpelle life, and reinforce our conviction that these themes have some importance for the Kpelle conceptualization.

Purchase a small notebook or binder and divide the pages into eleven sections, one for each theme identified by Dr. Stone and mark these sections with an index tab for ease of reference. As you read each chapter, listen to each song or instrumental piece, participate in each suggested activity in both this manual and the text, enter your reflections regarding how each song, dance, discussion, or activity serves to illustrate one or more of these themes. Join a group of your fellow students periodically to discuss these themes, sharing your thoughts, reflections to build a greater understanding of Kpelle music, in particular, and Kpelle culture as a whole.

Table 0.1 May be used to collect information. Using one page for each theme, note references to or reflections about themes as they occur in each chapter. Please keep in mind that some themes may not be addressed in each chapter.

**Table 0.1**

THEME # _____
<u>Chapter One:</u>
<u>Chapter Two:</u>
<u>Chapter Three:</u>
<u>Chapter Four:</u>
<u>Chapter Five:</u>
<u>Chapter Six:</u>

African music is a tradition mainly played at gatherings at special occasions the traditional music of Africa, given the vastness of the continent, is historically ancient, rich and diverse, with different regions and nations of Africa having many distinct musical traditions. Music in Africa is very important when it comes to religion. Songs and music are used in rituals and religious ceremonies, to pass down stories from generation to generation, as well as to sing and dance to. See more of WEST African MUSIC on Facebook. Log In. or. Create New Account. See more of WEST African MUSIC on Facebook. Log In. Forgot account? or.Â Redhawt beauties/modelling Agency. Health/Beauty. ALOUD Africa. Arts & Humanities Website. I Need A Baker.