

AFIA WALKING TREE ~ Afia's philosophy is that we are all on a journey to re-emerge as whole beings and be in sync with our universes. She uses African Diasporic drumming, singing, dancing, and the honoring of one's lineages as vehicle to help her clients and participants cultivate new tools and pathways to realize their destinies. Born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica, Afia Walking Tree is a masterful percussionist, visionary facilitator, and outstanding performer, singer-songwriter and recording artist who builds' bridges across multi-ethnic intergenerational communities. Afia has been a collaborative artist with many luminaries of our time.

In 2007 and 2008, Afia toured with the internationally acclaimed Les Amazones Women Master Drummers of Guinea as one of their lead soloists. This past January, Afia chaperoned thirty three people on her second Drum and Dance Cultural Immersion Tour to Guinea. There she received initiations for playing Djembe and Dunun for numerous ceremonies, dances, and social celebrations. Afia offers intensive study and consultation for individuals, semi-privates (2-4), and small to large groups at all levels. She also brings her work to schools, non-profits, colleges, universities, and corporations internationally.

ANNETTE A. AGUILAR – multi-percussionist, recording artist, educator, producer and bandleader – was born in San Francisco into a family from Nicaragua. She began playing music at the age of eleven

At sixteen, she was recognized for her percussion playing and began sitting in and performing with internationally renowned Latin artists such as members of the Santana Band, Cal Tjader, and Pete an Sheila Escovedo. She earned a Bachelor in Music from San Francisco State University, a Masters from Manhattan School of Music, and Masters in Music Education at CUNY. She has worked on Grammy Award-winning Broadway shows and currently serves as principal timpanist for the Bronx Symphony.

In 1992, she formed her Latin and Brazilian jazz group, Annette A. Aguilar & StringBeans. StringBeans soon became a popular fixture of the New York City's East Village and Lower East Side music scene.

A three-time selection as Latin Jazz Ambassadors by the U.S. State Department, the Kennedy Center and Jazz at Lincoln Center, the group has toured South Africa, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Madagascar, sharing their knowledge of music from the Americans and the Caribbean.

Their debut CD on their own label, Special Friends, and second CD, No Cheap Dates, received numerous reviews nationally and abroad. They will release their third CD, The Day Waits for Nobody in Spring 2009 in time for their return concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

For more information, see [Annette's website](#).

CAROLYN BRANDY has been drumming for over 40 years. She has been instrumental in bringing women to the spirit and healing of the Drum. Carolyn is the Artistic Director of Women Drummers International and co-creator of the Born to Drum Women's Drum Camp. She was also the founder of the Bay Area's favorite marching band, Sistah Boom in 1981. In 1976, Carolyn co-founded the popular band, Alive! that toured the nation for almost 10 years and has 4 recordings to its credit. She has worked in the SF Bay area for many years as a composer, performer, teacher and cultural worker

Carolyn is an expert in the folkloric drumming styles found throughout the island of Cuba. She has been a practitioner of the Yoruba-based Cuban religion, Regla de Ocha, also known as Santeria, since 1977. She was initiated as a priest of the religion in Havana, Cuba by Amelia Pedroso in 2000.

Carolyn has led five successful cultural tours to the Island of Cuba to study Folkloric music. She has organized workshops in Havana, Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Camaguey, Santiago De Cuba, and Guantanamo, where the groups studied with masters of Afro-Cuban drumming and dance.

Carolyn has recently produced an instructional DVD series called: Step by Step Conga Instruction. More information about her DVD's, and projects, can be found at: <http://www.carolynbrandy.com>

ELIZABETH SAYRE has performed, published articles about, and organized events around Afro-Latin, Brazilian, and African music since 1990. She is a freelance musician, teacher, researcher, writer, and translator/interpreter, as well as Visiting Instructor at Swarthmore College (Swarthmore, PA) in the Department of Music and Dance.

In Afro-Cuban music, she has studied with John Amira, Orlando Fiol, Amelia Pedroso, Lázaro Pedroso Michael Spiro, and Michel Aldama in Philadelphia, New York, San Francisco, and Havana, Cuba.

Since 2000 she has accompanied Afro-Cuban dance classes in New York City (batá, congas). Elizabeth is percussion captain for Obini Ashe and founder/musical director of Okan Iloro, two all women's Afro-Cuban folkloric groups based in New York. In the mid-1990s she was invited to join Samba Nosso, the project which eventually became Philadelphia's dance band sensation, Samba Nosso.

See Elizabeth's Web site for more information about her work.

JENI SWERDLOW at Drummm San Francisco Bay Area percussionist and registered art therapist Jeni Swerdlow, MA-ATR is a dynamic and engaging facilitator, trainer, presenter, and performer. Founding DRUMMM Rhythmic Events in 2000, her interactive, "hands-on" group drumming programs have engaged many thousands of participants at a wide variety of events in the U.S. and abroad. Swerdlow is a REMO endorsed drum circle facilitator, trained HealthRHYTHMS facilitator, and lifelong student of West African drumming and world percussion. Swerdlow is best known for her innovative strategies and playful attitude that foster teambuilding, support wellness, enhance celebrations, and strengthen community for event participants of all ages and backgrounds. More info is at www.DRUMMM.com

JUDY PIAZZA is nationally and internationally known for her extraordinary talents, exceptional skill, and generous, joyful spirit as performer, educator, music therapist, and workshop presenter. After 35 years exploring music as an expressive art and therapeutic healing tool, she continues to study and be inspired by sound traditions from various world cultures.

She has been featured at Drums of Illumination Frame Drum Festival, The Kennedy Center Arabesque Fest (with Elmaz Abinader), at the Bali Spirit Festival (with Tony Khalife) and Bali Tribal Music Tours Retreat, at Sacred Maya Journey to the Yucatan, at Studio Maui, The Om Ball and Chants 4Change as part of the 2009 inauguration events (with Saul David Raye), at the National Women's Music Festival (WI), at The Women's World Drum & Percussion Happen'n (NY), in Japan Music Therapy circles and events, Bioneers Conferences, and Music Educator and Therapy Conferences. She has recently completed a multi-year intensive Yogic Mystery School with Russill Paul after 15 years of exploring mantra and sound from the Indian perspective. Find out more at [Judy's web site](#) and [her My Space](#).

"Judy Piazza is the very embodiment of the concept of world music. Her artistry is rooted in the rhythms and melodies of peoples and cultures from around the world – from ethereal Native American chants and flute to the delicate gossamer strains of her dulcimer and guitar work to the haunting echoes of the aboriginal didgeridoo to the powerful beat of the many drums and percussion instruments of which she is master. Judy's vocals and stories weave these disparate musical elements into a seamless and unforgettable experience." – Bud & Donna Ford, The Dulcimer Shop, Manitou Springs, CO

LAS BOMBERAS DE LA BAHIA: DENISE AND SARA Las Bomberas De La Bahia was founded in April 2007 and is the Bay Area's first & only all-women's Bomba ensemble. The group is composed of Bay Area activists, educators, and artists who actively contribute to growing the tradition of Bomba and work to maintain & support Puerto Rico's oldest African influenced music and dance tradition, which formed in Puerto Rico's sugar cane plantations by slaves as a form of resistance. Las Bomberas de la Bahia have performed throughout the Bay Area for educational institutions, cultural centers, and cultural festivals.

Denise Solis is an activist, labor organizer, and musician who has lived in the Bay Area since 2002. Denise began studying the Afro Puerto Rican musical tradition of Bomba in 2004.

Sarazeta Ragazzi is a Boricua bred in San Francisco's Mission District. She is an artist, teacher and performer with over 15 years experience working in the cultural arts.

MAR STEVENS, drum warrior, began studying West African drumming ten years ago with Master Drummer Afia Walking Tree of Spirit Drumz and became her apprentice.

In 2008 Mar traveled to Guinea, Africa to attend the Fore-Fote Drum and Dance Camp. Under the tutelage of Master Drummers and dancers she continued her drum education and learned many traditional rhythms and dances.

Mar loves sharing the rhythms and dances of West Africa. She co-leads, "Rhythm Sistas," a woman of color drum circle held monthly in Oakland, CA. She also is a member of "Sistahs of the Drum," a Bay Area group of African-American women who drum to heal, transform, and witness through the power of the drum.

MICHAELLE GOERLITZ has been playing drums and percussion since she was eight years old. After attending college in the Midwest, she moved to San Francisco in 1980 to continue her studies, which have led to exploration of Brazilian, Afro Cuban, Venezuelan, Peruvian and Middle Eastern rhythms (plus American idioms jazz, R & B & funk).

She was a founding member of two renowned & long-term projects, the Blazing Redheads and Wild Mango. Both groups blended many different styles which showcased Michaelle's versatile percussive skills. Among the list of people Michaelle has played with: Wayne Wallace, Mark Levine, Proyecto Lando, the Pickpocket Ensemble, rhiannon, Barbara Higbie, Jami Sieber and Samba Rio.

NEENA MCNAIR

I first experienced drumming when a child at local pow-wows, I wanted to drum, but was told nope, not for girls. It wasn't even allowed to sing much with the drums then, no girls dancing like the boys, but I did hang around the fringes learning traditional women's dance, while listening real hard.

In my teens I became a dancer—folk dancing, modern dance, jazz, a little ballet—then I was introduced to Congolese dance and drum, got hooked! Soon after I asked for a guitar one x-mas and was given a conga. Well...had to learn how to use it, so that ensued for several more years. I learned to play some of the rhythms my body had been responding to...and was THAT ever exciting!

During that time, looking for a way to fill a hole in my broken heart, I had the good fortune to witness a native american women's drum circle...I was in LOVE. I followed them around like some little puppy dog groupie and eventually they allowed me to join them—HEAVEN! Time and place had changed the "rules"...I was living in CALIFORNIA now!

I have been singing and drumming in native women's plains-style drum circles for almost 20 years. A few years ago I was introduced to dununs, and have added some drum classes and drumming for dance class where I live. Shortly after I was introduced to dunun I had the great fortune to come to Born to Drum camp, on work study, and got to experience classes with Mabiba Baegne.

I knew Mabiba as a dancer...was I in for a surprise! I can't say that I'm any good at duns, but I can say that I LOVE the way they sound, and make me feel. I want to continue with my education and look forward to any drum circles that support the learning. Believe me...these are the times...and here we ARE!

ODILIA GALVÁN RODRÍGUEZ IS an internationally recognized poet, writer, journalist, editor teacher and activist who has traveled extensively. She has three books of poetry and her work has been published in numerous literary journals and anthologies. Her most recent book, *Migratory Birds: New and Noted Poems* is about her many journeys the physical as well as the spiritual.

Odilia is a guest this year and is offering her beautiful altar and workshops as a gift to all of us at Born to Drum.

SENA KUGBEGA is from Cape Coast, Ghana, (West Africa) and has been teaching drum and dance since she was 13 years old. As a young girl growing up, she always knew what she wanted to do.

Sena Kugbega has also travelled with her mother, Award winning only female master drummer in Ghana Adwoa Kudoto, throughout the US teaching and performing in Washington, New York, Atlanta and California, etc. ena was always willing to learn, learning how to have fun drumming and dancing. Dancing has always been part of her life and she does it with enthusiasm and joy. Sena is an excellent teacher and her classes are always fun with lots of room for plenty of laughter.

SHEREE SERETSE, Director of the Anzanga, Shumba Youth and Zambuko Marimba Ensembles has been teaching, studying and performing for 40 years. Affectionately known as "mama marimba", Sheree's passion and drive for Zimbabwean Marimba music comes through the 5 recordings she has produced and numerous other recordings she made appearances on.

Sheree received her initial training through renowned musician and composer Dumisani "Dumi" Maraire. She has facilitated many workshops around the country and has toured extensively around the globe.

Sheree believes that marimba music is accessible to everyone.

SIDNEY WEAVERLING is a co-director and co-founder of Rueda Con Ritmo, a Cuban-style dance school and performing group based in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is a longtime contributor to the currently thriving Cuban-style

salsa scene in the SF Bay Area, with more than 10 years of experience as a teacher, performer, and choreographer. She has given salsa and rueda workshops across the United States and internationally and has the teaching experience and attention to detail that enable her to transform and inspire dancers at any level.

SUE LUNDQUIST has had a passion for music since she can remember. As a child she studied piano and guitar and longed to play the drums.

Forty years ago girls were not encouraged to play. True to her desire to learn she finally found her path on the drum twenty years ago. Carolyn Brandy has been her inspiration and primary teacher of Afro-Cuban music on congas and bata drums. Recently, she has been studying and performing West African music with Ryan Camara

Sue has been sharing her knowledge and joy for drumming with adults and children in private classes and in the public schools. She currently performs with Blue Lightning(a dance band) and with Asesu Hand in Hand Drummers.

SUSU PAMPANIN has explored and studied all types of percussion instruments and styles of music, and her incredible talent is especially evident in her work in Middle Eastern drumming. Susu is well known for her virtuosity in Arabic drumming and is one of the few female Middle Eastern drummers highly respected by the Arabic professional music community.

She has worked and recorded with fusion ensembles, including Wild Mango, Keith Terry and Crosspulse, Stellamara, Jazayer, BlueNile, Vince Delgado Quintet, Susu and the Cairo Cats, and most recently, Holly Near. She also has a solo drum CD, Hands of Time.

Susu will present a Master Class in Middle Eastern Rhythms and Instruments.

THOZ WOMENZ

Above all else, we lift credit to our Creator for giving us purpose and the strength to chase our dreams. All-women drums are not new. Women have served in many roles throughout history, with Native women accepting responsibility in every area of life in our world. Our purpose at the drum has always been to mentor youth along a cultural road, to keep our language and songs, and to follow the heartbeat of the drum. Along this journey we pursue our health, identity, language and knowledge through the heartbeat of the drum.

Our style is women's – not Northern nor Southern. It is our hope that our songs are accepted with the respect in which we share them. Language is the foundation of culture. Our original songs have daily messages seeking to preserve the Cherokee language. Language preservation towards cultural resilience is a goal we share with many other women's drums. Like those drums, we seek to serve our communities.

o – gi – na – li – i o – tsa – tla – nv – dlv – i
(My friend. We are all sisters and brothers.)

Visit Thoz Womenz' website for more information about them and their music

TONYA LYLES–Based in Austin Texas, Tonya “Onye” Lyles has founded SistaDrums to rejuvenate, invigorate, and uplift a community through teaching the art of hand-drumming and movement linked to traditional world rhythms.

Tonya's drum path began at four years old. Her first drum was a tambourine played in a gospel choir where she sang and performed weekly. In 1994, her path converged with the West African djembe drum in Las Cruces, NM. Her drumming style has been greatly influenced by her teachers, Babatunje Olatundje Alseny Sylla, Karuna Warren, Edwina Tyler, Mohamed Camara, M'bembe Bangora, Ibrahim Diakate, Mouminatou Camara, Abdoulye Diakate, and Moussa Taore.

Tonya plays the djembe, djundjun, balaphon, shakaree, shakara, congas, bangos, cajon, Mrimba, talking drum, and dumbek. She has been playing and performing traditional rhythms on djembe since 1994 and currently teaches in Austin, Texas. Her performance experiences range from solo artist to member of a sixteen piece West African drum and dance ensemble. Drum on Sistas Drum!