

# Obo Addy stays true to Ghanaian tradition

By Darla Jackson  
Emerald Supplement Editor

Music is more than entertainment to Ghanaian master drummer Obo Addy. He seeks spiritual perfection in his drum playing.

According to Addy, intense and powerful rhythms, which are evoked from music, are what makes the spirits happy.

Obo and his band, Kukrudu, will bring African sounds and rhythms to the main stage of the Folk Festival Saturday at 8 p.m.

Addy was raised with music in his home. His father was a Wonche priest and medicine man for the Gu tribe of Ghana. Addy became a master drummer (someone who leads the drum ensemble) at the age of six. In 1978, Addy established his home in America and in 1982 formed Kukrudu, borrowing the name from an African

word for earthquake.

The musical style of the group is an intense and innovative fusion of Ghanaian and American music. They have recorded several albums, and their most recent, "African American," explores a bright sound similar to pop styles.

Addy's ties to Ghana remain strong. By teaching children and adults African tribal rituals and exposing them to the music, he is passing some of the tradition on.

"African music is the soul of its people," Addy said. "Everyone gets involved, even the onlookers."

Addy is encouraged by the current surge of interest in all types of ethnic music and the interplay among them.

"People are adding more technology to African music, so I think it's going to stick around," he said. "And it will add to American pop music."



Courtesy photo

Obo Addy and Kukrudu remain loyal to the origins of the African music they perform while using the latest technology to make it accessible to pop audiences.

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## Blackfish

Blackfish is a five-piece cajun and zydeco band that employs a lively mix of rhythm and blues, folk and funk. The group's music is a distinctly original part of the wave of roots rock heard in such performers as Los Lobos, The Fabulous Thunderbirds, and on Paul Simon's album "Graceland."

The cajun tunes that Blackfish perform tend to be waltzes and ballads with plaintive content, while the zydeco numbers are often more upbeat and bluesy.

## Northern Broadcasters

The Northern Broadcasters play tunes in a variety of traditional styles, including fiddle tunes from the Southern Appalachians, Georgia, Mississippi, and the Ozarks. The band also performs cajun tunes from Louisiana.

Beginning as a weekly bluegrass jam session in 1976, the 10-to-12 member ensemble group includes three original members.

This is the band's third Folk Festival appearance.

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