

Obo Addy's World Beat

continued **▲** from front

After World War II and during his teenage years, Addy first heard African and European pop music seeping from a radio in his village. At 15, he moved to the city four miles away where he became further influenced by Western pop. Uninterested in school, he joined a city orchestra as a drummer, but left after four brief, disappointing shows.

Broadcasting Band and the Farmers Council Band, but later gravitated to Highlife, the new blend of African and European music. In 1969, Addy was employed by the Arts Council of Ghana as a Ga master of the national music. He and his brothers performed at the Olympic Games in Munich in 1972 before embarking on an international tour.

Living in London, he toured ex-

and Clark College. He has done residencies at African-American centers in North Carolina, the Sweetwater Art Center in Pennsylvania, Washington State University, and Williams College in Massachusetts.

Addy is recognized by many young people, mostly former students, as the first to introduce them to the culture and music of West Africa and Ghana. His goal is to help

you came to my school when I was in second grade."

For Addy, writing, teaching and performing all come down to one thing, the music.

As a percussionist and singer, he leads two ensembles that tour nationally. Okropong, which means "eagle" in the Ga language, is his group dedicated to the traditional tribal music and dance of Ghana; and Kukrudu, Ga for "earthquake" is his group that performs original pieces he has created.

The traditional instruments in Okropong utilize Ghana hand and

and Okropong. He has collaborated with numerous musicians and his music has been performed by chamber groups across the country. He has also written for the Kronos Quartet, Saxoforte, Third Angle New Music Ensemble and modern dancer Mary Osland.

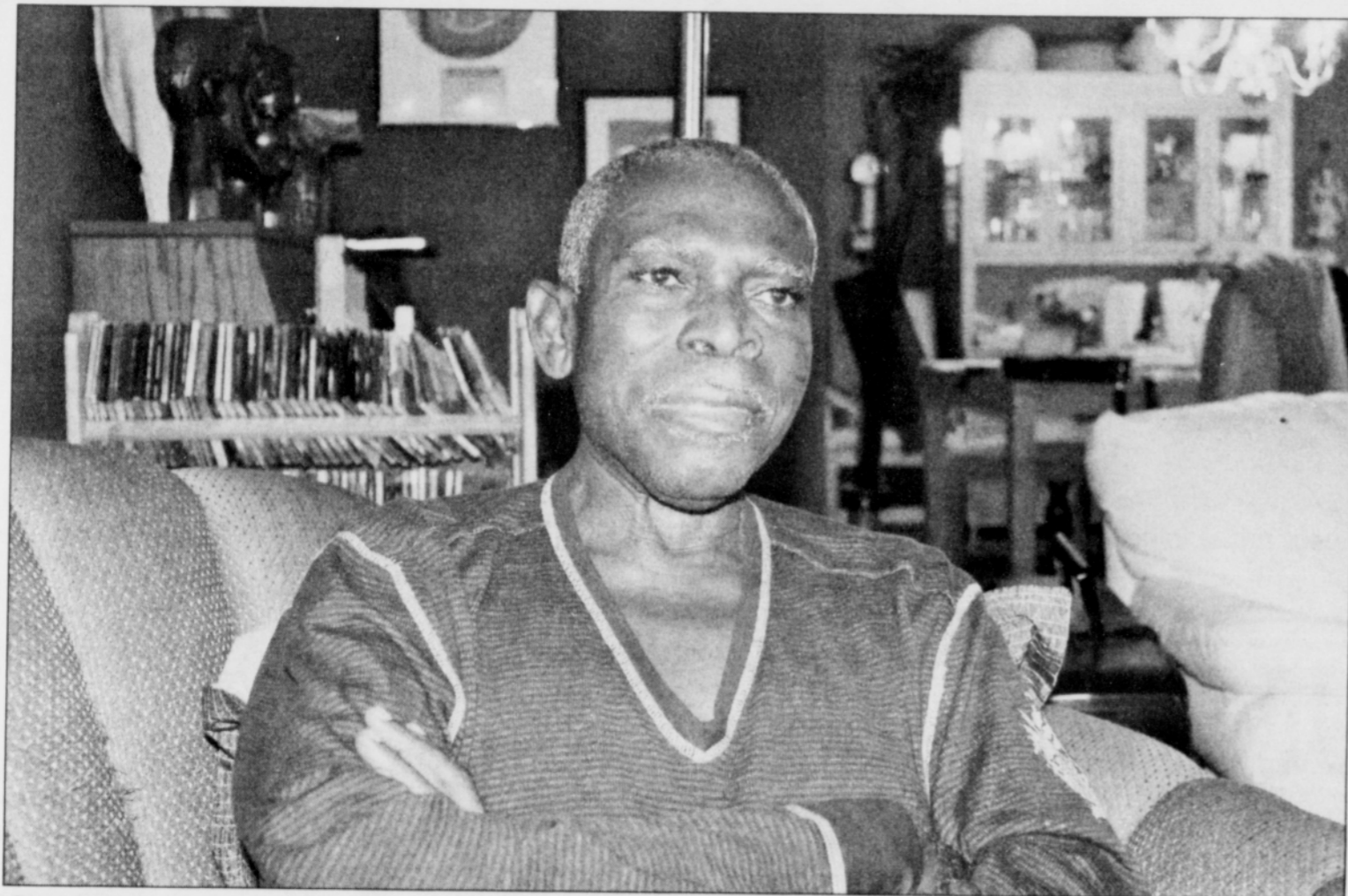
He's played the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and New York's Lincoln Center. He was awarded The Masters Fellowship from the Regional Arts and Culture Council, the Masters Fellowship from the Oregon Arts

Commission, and the Governors Award for the Arts in Oregon.

The Obo Addy Legacy Project carries forth the work begun by Homowo while focusing on creating, performing and teaching African arts under the continuing direction of Obo Addy. Under his leadership and vision, the Obo Addy Legacy Project will concentrate on producing major artistic performances, teaching in both K-12 schools and at the college level, and writing compositions.

Addy has warmly shared his music with Oregonians and people throughout the country for decades, but even at 75 years of age he says, "I'm haven't finished yet."

Sponsor tables for eight are being pre-sold for \$500 and individual tickets are \$50. The event includes dinner, a silent auction, and live entertainment. Tickets can be purchased at oboaddylegacyproject.org.



Obo Addy's charismatic spirit, rapid-fire hands and powerful voice has driven thousands of people to dance to the infectious beat of his drums.

Addy joined Joe Kelly's Band after he and his friend stunned a crowd of musicians at an audition. Small and nervous, Addy began rolling beats on unfamiliar bongos, not realizing how good he was until onlookers were left laughing and clapping. He was hired.

For many years, he played mostly European and American music, drumming for The Ghana

tensively until 1978, when Addy moved to the United States and settled in Portland where he met his wife Susan, a coordinator for arts and education. She was the one who introduced him to a life of teaching as part of a multicultural program that employed him as a visiting artist to schools throughout the state.

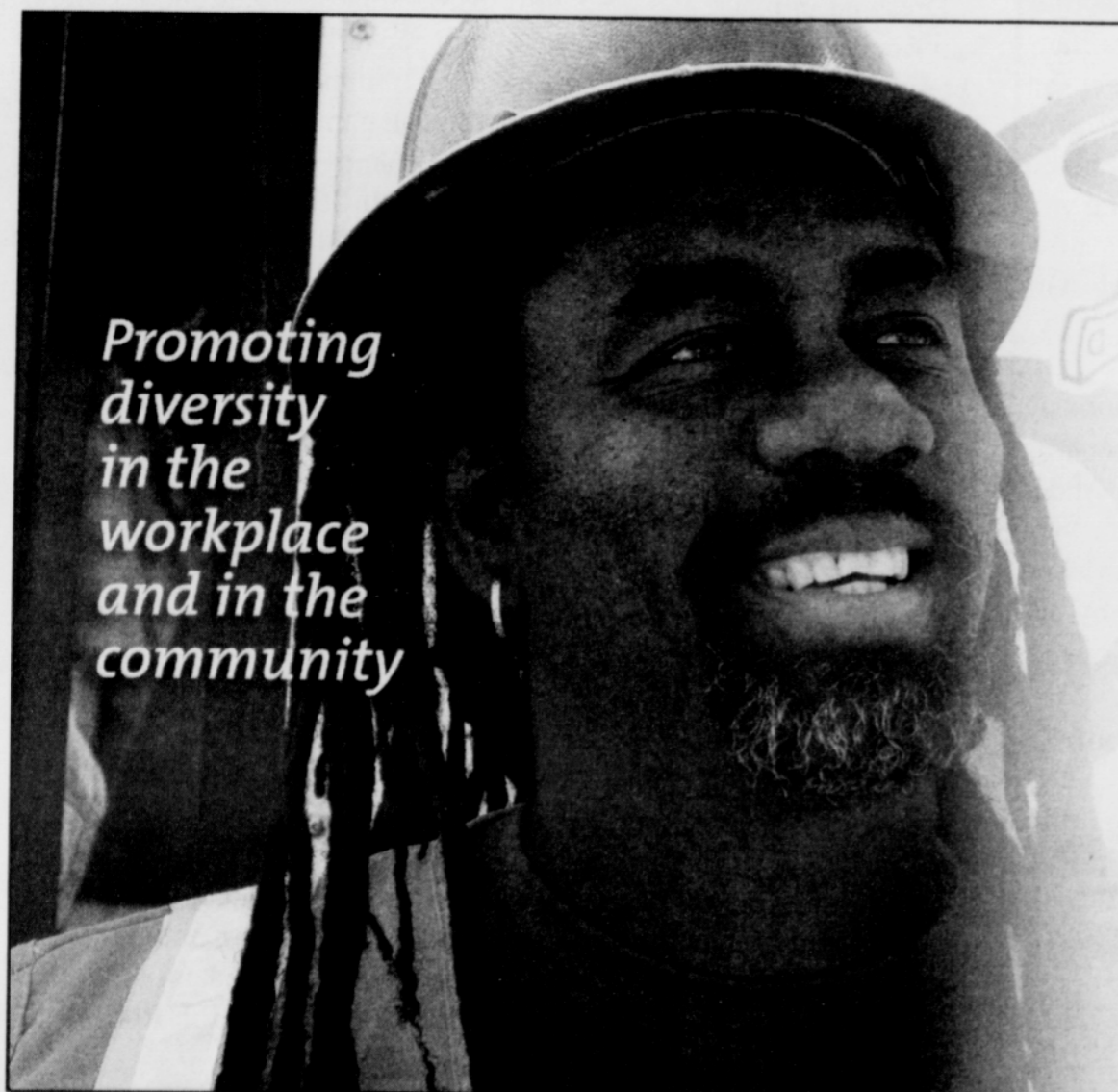
Addy has taught at the Cornish Institute and most recently at Lewis

people understand African music. "I want them to get a piece of traditional Ghanaian music and culture," he said.

Teaching kids how to make their own music out of traditional drumming is a joy for Addy, but his true appreciation shows when he can walk into the nearby Safeway or Fred Meyer and a store clerk recognizes him by saying, "I know you,

stick drums, bells, and shakers to create a layered rhythmic effect. Dance and singing are equally important parts of the performance. Kukrudu is an eight-piece African jazz group that blends African and European instruments.

Addy's recordings include Afieye Okropong, Wonche Bi, Let Me Play My Drums, The Rhythm of Which a Chief Walks Gracefully,



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