

# Maputo Mensah

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## International Performer

Maputo has been performing traditional Ghanaian dance and drumming for more than 30 years, with his first professional performance at the age of 10. Maputo studied with renowned Mustapha Tettey Addy for 14 years, and has performed solo, in his own Logo Ligi troupe, and as a guest drummer and dancer internationally.

## Performance Highlights

### Logo Ligi Dance Troupe, Boulder, CO

Executive and Artistic Director, Choreographer, Performer (2000-present)

Logo Ligi is a troupe of skilled Ghanaian and American dancers and drummers that perform, teach, and celebrate Ghanaian performance art. Performance examples include:

- Crestone Music Festival, Crestone, CO (2015, 2013)
- Solstice Festival Performance, Rainbow Ranch, Niwot, CO (2014-present)
- Adventure Film Festival, Children's Show Boulder Theater, Boulder, CO (2012)
- Intercambio Fiesta, at the Elks Lodge Boulder, CO (2011-present)
- University of Colorado's Taste of Africa, Boulder, CO (2007)
- City of Longmont Summer Series, Longmont, CO (2007)
- Naropa University, Student World Concert, Boulder, CO (2002-2006)
- University of Denver, Denver, CO (2003)
- Boulder Creek Festival, Boulder, CO (2002)
- Taos African Dance and Drum Festival, Taos, NM (2002)
- Bantu Drumming & Dance Camp, Santa Fe, NM (2001, 2003, 2005)

### **Guest Performances**

- Camp Mervilles, Boulder, CO (2007-2012)
- Camp Mabina, Santa Fe, NM (2000-2012)
- Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, England: solo performance (2010)
- Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ: solo performance (1999)
- Art International African Music Institute, New York, NY (1999)
- Homowo Festival with Obo Addy, Oregon (1999)

### **Akrowa Dance Ensemble, Accra, Ghana**

Lead Dancer and Choreographer (1990-1999)

- Toured with Royal Obonu Drummers (1999), international tour with Peter Gabriel's WOMAD Festival and collaborated with Pharaoh Sanders
- Toured with Mustapha Tettey Addy, Burkina Faso (1997)
- Panafest African Music Festival, Accra, Ghana (1994, 1996)
- Toured with Royal Obonu Drummers, Boston and Seattle (1993)

### **Akatanwia Ghanaian Music and Dance Ensemble**

Guest Performer

- Performed with Laryae Addy's ensemble, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. (1999)

### **African American Dance Ensemble**

Guest Performer

- Choreographed dance and performed with the ensemble and Chuck Davis in North Carolina and in Gambia, West Africa (1997)

### **West African Folkloric Troupe, Accra, Ghana**

Lead Dancer (1980-1990)

- Choreographer/assistant leader in a troupe of drummers and dancers that performed around Ghana at festivals and other events

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## **Recordings**

### **AKPE**

Maputo Mensah, Mawuenyega Mensah, Fara Tolono

2006

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## **African Culture, Drumming, and Dance Instructor**

Maputo is dedicated to spreading the joy and beauty of Ghanaian culture through dance, drumming, and culture classes at all levels: university, K-12 schools, and community classes. Maputo is a master drummer and dancer, and uses these and storytelling to teach about how to live and enjoy life.

### **Teaching Experience**

#### **University**

- University of Denver: African Dance, History & Culture quarter course, (2015-present)
- University of Colorado, Boulder: African Dance, History & Culture semester course, Teacher in Residence (2006-present)
- Naropa University, Boulder: African Dance, History & Culture semester course, Teacher in Residence (2000-2015)
- University of Alaska, Fairbanks AK: workshop and performance (2006 and 2007)
- University of Kansas workshop (2007)
- University of Oregon: guest teacher (2006)
- Dartmouth College, New Hampshire: two-week workshops (1997)

#### **K-12 Schools**

- Harris Park Elementary, Westminster, CO: workshop (2012)
- Boulder Country Day School, Boulder, CO: workshop (2012)
- Waldorf School, Denver CO: 7th grade course (2007)
- Denver Public Schools, Mapleton Mesa, CO: workshop (2007)
- New Vista High School, Boulder, CO: workshop (2005)
- Creekside Elementary, Boulder, CO: workshop (2005)
- Boulder High School, Boulder, CO: workshop (2005)
- Grand Rapids Schools, Michigan: workshop (1999)

#### **Community**

- Community Dance Collective, Boulder: African Drumming, African Dance (2006-present)
- Kakes Studios, Boulder: African Dance (2006-present)
- Bantaba World Dance and Music Studio, Boulder: African Dance (2001-2006)
- Academy of African Music and Arts, Kokrobite, Ghana (1987-2000)
- Various workshops: Fort Collins, Boulder, Denver, Taos, Albuquerque, Philadelphia, Womenty North Carolina

## Tour Organizer and Leader

### **Spicy Juicy Workshops: West African Arts & Cultural Adventure (2006-present)**

Maputo leads month-long trips to Ghana every summer. In addition to field trips and cultural outings, these immersion experiences include daily drumming, dance, singing, and storytelling lessons by Ghanaian master artists and a weekly lesson by Maputo. Students are also offered classes in the Ga language.

## About Maputo

Born in Accra, Ghana, Maputo Mensah grew up in a family of drummers and dancers. He began performing in a family group at the age of five. His first professional performance was at the age of 10 with the West African Folkloric Troupe. Maputo learned the traditional songs, dances, and drumming by watching the Ghana Dance Ensemble as well as participating, and watching drumming and dancing in Ghana at events and festivals. Maputo combines a love of Ghanaian culture with a passion for sharing joy with people around the world.

Maputo has dedicated his life since the age of five to mastering the art, skill, and tradition of West African dance. Since 1990, he has used this mastery to bring joy to people of all backgrounds, teaching enjoyment of life and respect for others through West African tradition.

Following his early childhood experiences, Maputo studied classical African dance and drumming for 14 years at the Academy of Africa Music and Arts in Kokrobite, Ghana, under master drummer and dancer Mustapha Tettey Addy, who spent his life gathering traditional rhythms and dances from all over West Africa to preserve them for posterity, and who has sent traditional African musicians all over the world to spread the ancient wisdom within these art forms. Besides traveling the U.S. teaching African traditions, Maputo has toured with Peter Gabriel's WOMAD Festival, the Royal Obonu Drummers, Chuck Davis, collaborated with Pharaoh Sanders, and given workshops and performances in Germany and London.

Maputo's apprenticeship under Mustapha Tettey Addy and the other master dancers and drummers at AAMA gave him an undergraduate degree, and a very rich educational foundation from which to develop his own curriculum in traditional West African dance and culture.

Since moving to the U.S. in 1999, Maputo has led workshops at the University of Alaska, the University of Oregon, Washington State University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, and Northern Arizona State University. Besides the community dance and drumming classes he offers weekly in Boulder and Lafayette, Colorado, Maputo has taught his own curriculums at Naropa University from 2000 to 2015, at the University of Colorado, Boulder, at Libby Hall from 2005 to the present, and at

the University of Denver starting in 2015. He was Assistant Director of the CU West African Highlife Ensemble under the direction of Dr. Kwasi Ampene from 2006-2010, and became Executive Director starting in 2010. CUWAHE performs Highlife and traditional music from Ghana, Togo, Congo, Ivory Coast, and Nigeria, Africa. In addition, Maputo is currently Executive Director of the Logo Ligi dance ensemble, a professional dance company with which he has performed at venues across Colorado, as well as performing outreach at local grade schools, and for after school enrichment programs such as the Girl Scouts, since 2001.

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## References

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## **Additional Information**

**Mustapha Tettey Addy**

<http://www.ghanabase.com/mustaphatetteyaddy/biography.asp>

**Maputo Mensah YouTube Links**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGUP1FnO8v8>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OqBaGldxkg>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdNrCg8GU64>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZ6BbUV6DLA>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-d2g7iYTN0>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9VEAvumwx4>

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