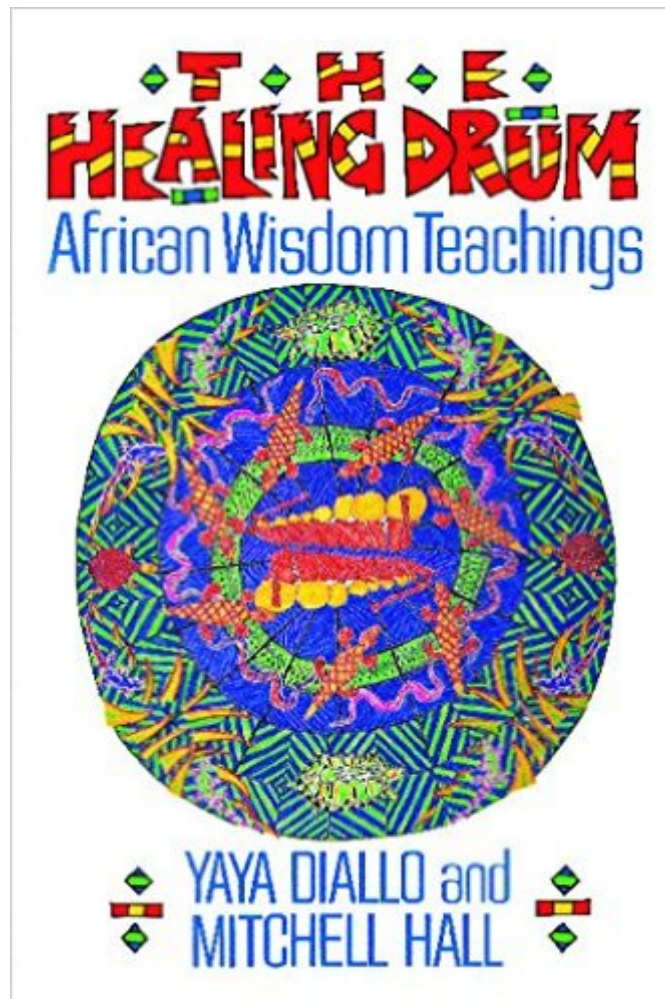


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The Healing Drum: African Wisdom Teachings



Synopsis

The Healing Drum traces the extraordinary cultural legacy of the Minianka tribe of West Africa, for whom music serves a sacred, healing function for the individual and society. The authors explore the Minianka view of humanity, music, and the cosmos relative to work, celebration, herbal medicine, dance, trance, initiation, and death.Â The first book of its kind, delivering a message of untapped wisdom and power from a little-known culture through the universal medium of music.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is about music, healing, indigenous view of life and above all, it is about harmony, which is achieved when life is lived with respect and with generosity. Diallo is a member of the mainly agricultural Minianka/Senufo tribe living in what today is Mali. The Minianka have been able to resist the depredations which occur when Islam or X-ianity enters African societies; they are animist, that is, they still observe and follow ancient laws that emphasize the interdependence between humans, nature and the transcendent realms. Music to the Minianka music is much more than entertainment. It is used for work, celebration, ritual, inititations, funerals and healing; each activity (as well as each profession and each person) has its own special rhythms and harmonies. The MInianka understand music as a bridge between the visible and invisible. As such, it is used to establish harmonious relationships between an individual, his community, his ancestors and the Creator. Every night there is dancing at the village square - and EVERYBODY dances. Minianka musicians learn to transpose the essence of their fellow men's characters into music, so that when a villager gets to dance, he is greeted by rhythms which match his/her character and emotional configuration. By observing

closely, the musicians can adapt the music to the needs of the listener and thereby lead them to health. In Minianka villages, says Diallo, "musicians are healers, the healers musicians.... Music...amplifies to our sense the unheard tones and unseen waves that weave together the matter of existence. The beat, the rhythm, the timing, the orchestration, the flow, the balance between action and rest must all be within well-defined limits...

"The Healing Drum: African Wisdom teachings" by YaYa Diallo and Mitchell Hall offers an introspective view into the Minianka culture of Mali. As an African-American student, this book helped me to understand a lot about myself. For example, YaYa explains that in his culture, musicians have a responsibility for the affect that the music has on it's listeners. "In my culture, art is allied with morality." (94) We in the West have debated the issue of the artist's responsibility for some time now. As an aspiring actress and writer, my belief has always been that we have are responsible for the messages we send through our art. YaYa explains that music can not only heal, but also can hurt. This is evident in the complacent attitude of many of today's rap artists and it's consumers. YaYa also expounds on some of the differences between the value of time and structure in Minianka culture vs. the same concept in the West. Understanding this element of an African culture allowed me to realize that I am not as crazy as many of my peers and professors would have me to believe. YaYa's description of the late-night festivals helped me to understand why I can stay up all night and sleep all day sometimes. I was offended by one review which stated that YaYa's book describes Miniankas as drug addicts. His description of the Minianka's use of herbs and medicines to heal is no different or worse than the Western philosophy of popping pills to make troubles disappear, i.e, prozac, ritalin, sleeping pills, etc. YaYa also emphasizes the importance of music in the healing process, and his descriptions of instances in which music was used to heal in his culture are both moving and sincere.

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