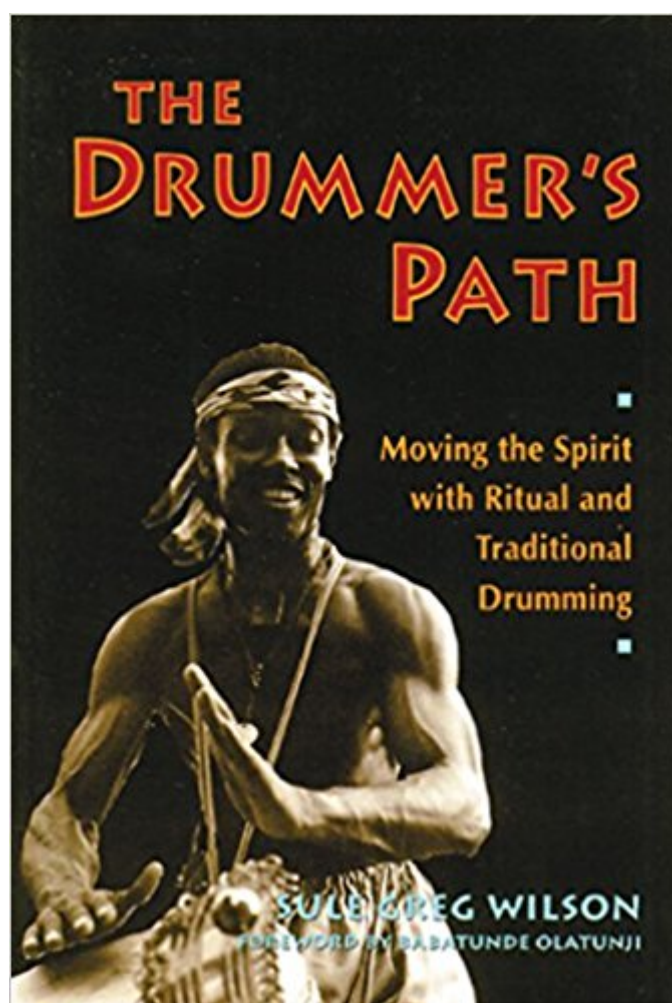


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The Drummer's Path: Moving The Spirit With Ritual And Traditional Drumming



Synopsis

Drummer, dancer, and folklorist Sule Greg Wilson introduces the principles behind African and Diaspora music, including breath, posture, and orchestration.

Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Destiny Books; Original ed. edition (June 1, 1992)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0892813598

ISBN-13: 978-0892813599

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.4 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 9 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

"... an astonishing array of instruments in dynamic arrangements that capture the spirit and power of ritual and traditional drumming."--"Tower Pulse"

Drummer, dancer, folklorist, and researcher, Sule Greg Wilson studied drumming under Baba Ngoma as well as the premier students of Baba Ishangi, Ladji Camara, and Chief Bey and performed with many of the finest artists and groups in the field, including Babatunde Olatunji, the International Afrikan-American Ballet, Africa in Motion Dance Theater, and the Bennu Ausar Aurkestra. He also produced the CD and audiocassette *The Drummer's Path*.

This is a well written book by a dedicated and gifted writer. I shared the book at a gathering this weekend and everyone was impressed. The book recounts an important aspect of the African American legacy of both known and unknown champions of the culture of music and drumming. Everyone who "thumbed through" the book wanted to know how to get it and should be placing their orders, if they have not already done so. This book will become an important part of my personal library. The spirit and rituals remain with us through drumming and this book (and others like it)

further ensures that trailblazers such as the Araba Baba Walter Ince will never be forgotten.

fantastic

This is an excellent book on many different levels. Firstly, Sule Wilson provides an informative and sometimes lyrical introduction to the many different styles of traditional African and Diaspora drumming genres currently popular in the United States. He also raises issues such as spirituality, drumming etiquette, the relation of drumming to dance and song and the thorny issue of gender. Sule provides some really crucial insights on a number of different technical topics. One example: his discussion of the technique difference between djembe and conga drumming has always struck me as one of the best descriptions/analyses of these two instruments. This is as much a personal statement by a committed and sincere African American student of percussion as it is a "how-to" kind of book and this is its other great strength. While there are many different strands of opinion and belief within the African-American community on EVERY issue, Sule points out how and why we should all pay attention to the issue of cultural respect when any of us (no matter what race, gender or culture we come from) gets involved with drumming. There may be minor points of disagreement between Sule and other writers, but in the main, this book thoroughly deserves its status in the drumming community as the one essential introductory book for serious students of the Black percussion arts. (A more musicological approach - also highly recommended - is John Miller Chernoff's wonderful book "African Rhythms and African Sensibility").

I had been playing the piano for many years and wanted to learn more about rhythms and I picked up this book in a local bookstore and within a year I had started to learn to play African rhythms on the Djembe and Djun Djun. This book really opened my eyes to the beauty and complexity of traditional African rhythms and how they influenced the rhythms of both North and Latin America. The book does not teach any rhythms but teaches all the basic principles of playing the drum and the mental/spiritual aspect of it. Highly inspirational and highly recommended. Two other good books about the philosophical aspect of drumming are Diallo's "The Healing Drum" and Reinhard Flatischler's "The Forgotten Power Of Rhythm; Taketina". And a good book who teaches a lot of rhythms is "A Rhythmic vocabulary" by Alan Dworsky

I read this book fifteen years ago before drumming became so mainstream and new age. If you really want a historical inside view of a drumming culture, this is your book. I'm pre PC (politically

correct?) and I believe "All us white Euro folks beating on African drums without a clue to their antecedents, history or heritage would be well served to read this book" just out of respect for the drum and it's culture. This man grew up drumming with his African rhythm roots in place, while studying to be a formally trained 'percussionist' in New York. His writing gives an interesting insight into the physical, metaphysical and spiritual aspects of drumming, long before the white coated clinicians documented and sanctioned the healing aspects of rhythm.

As a woman drummer and drum maker of the past 10 years I was very disappointed by Mr. Wilson's ideas regarding women and drumming. The fact is, women throughout the history of humankind have endured countless hours of back breaking physical labor, many times with an infant strapped to their backs, from gathering firewood to working fields to walking miles just to find and carry home water. Sule, living in a place where most people are not subject to living so close to basic survival has forgotten what his female African ancestors had to endure upon their arrival in this country. His theory that women would "fry their eggs" if they played a conga or a djembe (I play both, as do many professional female percussionists) does not fly since most of us can imagine that the above mentioned forms of labor are much more demanding on anyone's body than playing drums. If his theory were in fact true, it is possible that none of us would be here. Women are not as fragile as most men think we are. Mr. Wilson does have some very good advice on spirit and the flow of energy while drumming. But I enjoyed "When the Drummers were Women" much more!

As someone learning to play drums and interested in African rhythms, I must say that this book was quite a let down. It offers very little useful information on drumming itself, and the ideas it does offer (the 12 principles) are expressed in uninteresting ways, lacking in subtlety. If you're interested in a book that offers insight into the meaning of African drumming, avoid this book and look to John Chernoff's African Rhythm and African Sensibility.

Hi; I'm the author. I put on paper some of the principles of "getting myself right" by traditional drumming: Breath, Posture, Health, Women and drums, some history. Let me know what you think. The CD/cassette is music relevant to topics discussed in the book.

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