

150 WOMEN

20 GREAT TEACHERS

4 DAYS

UNLIMITED SWEET, SPIRITUAL AFRICAN, LATIN, MIDDLE EASTERN & FUSION RHYTHMS

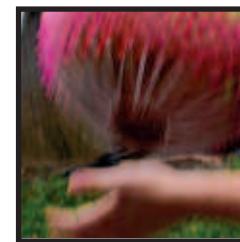
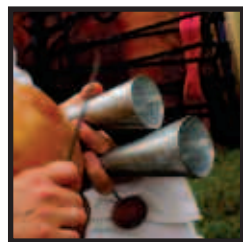
DRUM CENTRAL

THE 8TH ANNUAL

CATSKILL MOUNTAIN WOMYN'S WORLD DRUM & PERCUSSION HAPPEN'N

JULY 2005

BY ELLEN SHAPIRO



For seven years, Drum Central has advanced women's participation in the ancient, sacred traditions of global women's drumming. In July 2005 I joined its annual gathering, the Catskill Mountain Womyn's World Drum & Percussion Happen'n.

Co-producers Leaf Miller, Fre Atlast, and Ubaka Hill had assembled some of the most dynamic, inspiring, and skilled women musician-teachers in the drumming world. From and with them, 150 women of all ages learned rhythms, and techniques of the djembe, dumbek, congas, frame drum, tablas, shekere, bells, and other world percussion.

We learned musical styles of West Africa, North Africa, Brazil, Haiti, Japan, Cuba, the Middle East, India, and the pre-Columbian Americas. We explored rhythms for healing, teaching, facilitation, and performance. We moved with African dance, bellydance, and capoeira. We learned to tune and repair our drums. After morning and afternoon classes and workshops, we experienced such events as the Blessing of the Drums, Saturday Night Showcase, and Vibrational Healing Circle. We added to our own percussion collections at the marketplace of instruments and handcrafts by gifted craftswomen. We ate well, laughed a lot, and jammed. A Heartbeat Drum was sustained throughout the gathering, day and night.

This photo-essay celebrates the procession leading to the Blessing of the Drums.



We wear white. We bring our instruments and line up according to age.
These are the elders.



World drummer Leaf Miller, in sunglasses, leads the beautiful chaos.



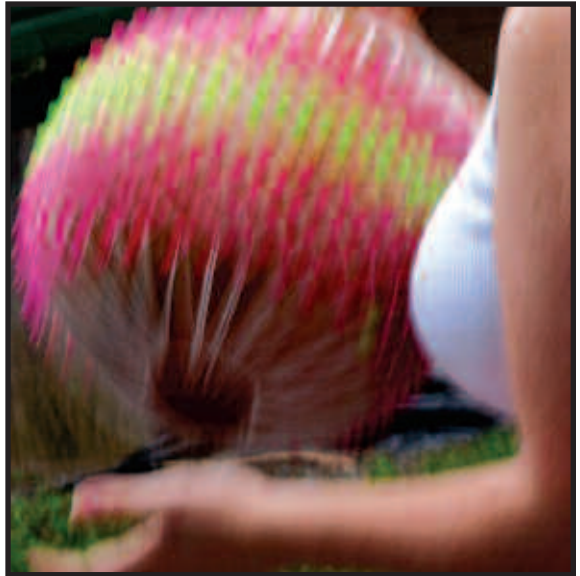
The Heartbeat Drum keeps the pulse.







We make our way to the tent.





We enter the tent for blessings...



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to be greeted by Ubaka Hill and her precious teaching.