

Tony Vacca

Tony Vacca is an American-born percussionist, composer, and educator who plays West African balafon, djembe, talking drum, an orchestra of gongs, drum set, and a one-of-a-kind percussion unit. His music combines elements from a wide range of traditions. The result is an innovative hybrid of ancient and contemporary sounds; it's a hard-hitting fusion of jazz and World Music that confirms the powerful common ground that music provides. Tony incorporates original spoken word into his performances to create a link from the traditions of rap and hip-hop to their origins among the soothsayers and griots of West Africa. In concerts and in hands-on workshops, Tony demonstrates how these elements are each part of a total mix of influences on music and culture in America, and how music is an ideal medium for transcending our differences by providing a context for communication.

Tony founded **World Rhythms** in 1993, a production company that reflects the global nature of music featuring local, regional and internationally known performers. Together they form a consortium of musicians whose collective skills and insights create a wide range of programs from concert performances at Jazz and World Music festivals, to recordings, videos, and "hands-on" educational workshops, master classes, and concerts.

In 1995 Tony created **The Senegal-America Project**, an exchange program bringing musicians from Dakar, Senegal together with the World Rhythms performers from America. These tours include concerts and workshops in middle schools and high schools, giving Senegalese and American students a chance to learn more about each others worlds.

EXPERIENCE

Tony has over thirty years performance experience as a percussionist/drummer, with sixteen plus study trips to West Africa, presenting programs ranging from educational concerts and workshop presentations in schools, to collaborative recordings, Jazz and World Music festivals, and special tours.

Tony has recorded and performed with a wide range of musicians, including pop icon Sting, Senegalese Afro-pop superstar Baaba Maal, Jazz and World Music innovator Don Cherry, genre-defiant Yusef Lateef, Senegalese master drummer Massamba Diop, Gambian twentieth-century griot Foday Musa Suso, Abiodun Oyewole of The Last Poets, and Italian folk drummer Alessandra Belloni. Tony's music reflects all of these influences and more.

PHILOSOPHY

Lyrics excerpt from "Culture Collision" by Tony Vacca, "The world is a big place and there's room enough for everybody." Music is the common language and link to communicating and getting along with everyone in the world. Music is a teaching tool that helps some students "see", understand and learn in a new way.

Arts ARE ESSENTIAL, Inc.

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REFERENCES:

Partial List of Clients (Variety of types of schools and programs) More upon request.

- Hartford Performs Jaclynn Hart, Program Director, 860-249-8672
jhart@hartfordperforms.org Arts Integrated Programs in Hartford Public Schools since 2011.
- International School of Boston Cambridge MA Marti Lemp, MS Director
direct line 617-583-9203 cell 781-775-6029 mlemp@isbos.org.
Hands-on workshops and performance Tony Vacca & Abdou Sarr-Senegalese Dancer
- South Middle School Westfield MA Andy Vengrove, Counselor direct line 413-568-1900 x1119 cell 413-552-8014 a.vengrove@schoolsofwestfield.org
Hands-on workshops and performances (students performing in assembly) with Tony Vacca and a variety of artists. Repeat Client
- Bagnall Elementary Groveland MA 978-372-8856 (s) Ruth Rivard, Parent Coordinator, home 978-556-9155 cell 617-653-8966 ruthrivard@comcast.net
We have been an annual guest for several years(9?) now. Tony solo. Hands on workshops with 6th graders on 1st day then 6th graders perform in morning assembly for peers on 2nd day.
- Ms. Liz MacDonald, Cotting School, Lexington, MA emacdonald@cotting.org
Music Teacher 781-862-7323 – client (students with wide range of special needs). We have done several performances, workshops and a residency with Cotting students.

ENDORSEMENTS

- Paiste Cymbals & Gongs
- Remo

EDUCATION AND TRAINING:

- Bachelor of Arts, 1972, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA
- Studies with Godwin Agbeli at the Dagbe Cultural Center, Accra, Ghana, West Africa. Mr Agbeli is a learned specialist in the percussion ensemble traditions of many of the Ghanaian peoples,
- Studies with Sekou Diollo at the Centre des Arts Malien, located in Bamako, Mali, West Africa. Mr Diollo is a Djoula balafon player and Instructor at the National Arts Center.
- Studies In Dakar, Senegal, West Africa with Massamba Diop, master tama drummer with Baaba Maal's ensemble, Daande Lenol.

RECOGNITION:

- Mass Cultural Council's Creative Teaching Artist Roster
- Hartford Performs Teaching Artist Roster
- New England Foundation for the Arts: NEST Touring Roster
- Named to the Advisory Board of the American Association of Music Therapists,
- Interworld Music: instructional music video, "Melodic Percussion."

RECORDINGS:

2015 "THE SENEGAL-AMERICA PROJECT: EVOLUTION OF THE VIBE" Tony Vacca & many guest artists

2010 "INITIATION" (IE001) Tony Vacca, Derrik Jordan, and Jim Matus

2008 "HYTHM & FLOW" (WR0801) Tony Vacca and World Rhythms Ensemble

2006 "SENEGAL-AMERICA PROJECT" (WR0601) Tony Vacca with Massamba Diop, Derrik Jordan, Gokh-bi System, Abiodun Oyewole, Fata, Bada Seck, Yourell Ka, Daouda Dia, Abdourahmane Diallo, Tim Moran, Barou Sall, Mbaye Ndiaye Tilala, Jo Sallins, Fafadi, Steve Leicach, Sang-B, Abimael Robles, Pape Sakho

2002 "ZEN RANT" (WR0201) Tony Vacca with Abiodun Oyewoloe, Barou Sall, Massamba Diop, Omar Ndiaye, Tim Moran, Steve Leicach Jo Sallins, Gokh-bi System

1999 "RHYTHM GRIOTS" (WR0001) Tony Vacca with Massamba Diop, Gokh-Bi System, Sekou Sylla, Omar Ndiaye, Tim Moran, Steve Leicach, and Jo Sallins

1998 "RHYTHM MISSION" (WR9801) Tony Vacca with Massamba Diop, Tim Moran, Steve Leicach & Jo Sallins

1997 "WORLD RHYTHMS TRIO" (WR9701) Tony Vacca, Massamba Diop, and Steve Leicach

1992 "DANCE BENEATH THE DIAMOND SKY" (Columbia: CK47391) Tony Vacca and Tim Moran with guest artists, Foday Musa Suso, Avery Sharpe, Bobby Previte, & Bendik

1986 "CITY SPIRITS" (Philo Records; 9007) Tony Vacca and Tim Moran with guest artists Don Cherry & Tim Wolf

1983 "FAR EAST SUBWAY BLUES" (Muse/Art Records, M337) Winds of Change

1983 "WIZARDS DANCE" (Philo/Fretless Records FR669 re-issued by Nippon Phonogram, 32PD- 20/200) Tony Vacca & Tim Moran