Women Drummers International
Born To Drum 2026
Class Descriptions

Afia Walking Tree

Demba (Drum) Djembe from Source 1 & 2
Lead with your Fiyah through Demba (Drum) Djembe

All Levels

Soulo with Confidence through Djembe

Intermediate/Advanced

GOURDSONG Shekere!

All Levels

Shake, groove, and connect with the spirit of the gourd – Bring your own, borrow from friend, or use one of ours. Come ready to move, groove, and celebrate the joyful power of the gourd!

No experience necessary to be in this space. Bring a shaker, sound bowl, tuning fork.

Amikaeyla Gaston

ROOTS OF THE CAULDRON - Sound Healing SERIES

Join us for a transformative and immersive experience in the *Sacred Sounds of Water ~ a Self-Healing & Sound Bath* unique workshop which combines the healing properties of water, the vibrational power of sound, and the art of crafting personalized healing baths and pouring libations for the ancestors. Participants will learn songs and ceremonies to honor Sacred Water Goddesses from multiple indigenous traditions as well as create sacred herbal baths that promote physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Gathering the Sacred Soul - Ancestral Medicine Healing Circle

All Levels

Let's raise the Vibration in these challenging times. Join us at the upper ancestral fireside for communal circle-song and prayer sound healing session.

Honoring your Inner Oshun

All Levels

Heal from within through the Sacred Sounds, Spells, and Ceremonial Practices for Bodies of Water and Herbal Healing Bath Making Class.

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Women Drummers International
Born To Drum 2026
Class Descriptions

Amy Vitro

Shekere & Agogo: Feel the Fire!

Shekere, sekere, chekeré, xequerê, djabara, axatse, afoxé. Known by many names, originating in Yorubaland, the shekere (beaded calabash) manifests and moves energy, creating pathways for expressing the soul. We will explore shekere and agogo (double bell) through traditional rhythms, fun improvisations and movements, and practical techniques for unleashing your inner fire!

Shekere & Agogo: Rhythm, Groove, and Joy (Friday)

All Levels

This fun, high-energy class introduces the vibrant sounds of the shekere and agogo. No experience needed – just bring your curiosity and willingness to move. We'll explore basic techniques, simple patterns, and how these instruments "talk" to each other. Through call-and-response, group grooves, and playful exercises, you'll build confidence and ease while making music together in a relaxed and welcoming space.

Shekere & Agogo: Rhythm, Flow, and Improvisation with 6/8 Güiro (Sunday)

Intermediate

Ready to deepen your groove and fire up your playing? This intermediate class is for those who are comfortable with basic shekere and agogo techniques and want to expand into the flowing feel of 6/8 through the güiro rhythm. We'll break down the 6/8 clave and explore how güiro translates to shekere and agogo. Expect dynamic challenges, cool techniques, and ensemble work that brings this rhythm to life. Come ready to listen deeply, move with the rhythm, and elevate your playing!

Bring your own shekere and/or agogo. There will also be some available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Arisika Razak

Keeping Faith in Difficult Times: Nurturing Our Bodies, Hearts, and Minds

All Levels

In these challenging and difficult times, how are we nurturing our bodies and sustaining our hearts? How are we managing our despair and overwhelm? Who and what is guiding and inspiring us? Join me for a session of movement, meditation, writing and story-telling, as we release impediments to our individual and collective health, and invite more balance, ease and clarity into the current moment.

Alliance Building, Activism, Forgiveness, and Cancel Culture

All Levels

How do we call people to account for their wrong-doing and still leave room for them to change and make amends? How do we react on learning about the hidden harm caused by those who've inspired us – and how do we forgive ourselves for our misplaced trust? And in an era rife with fake news, lies, and mis-and-dis-information, how can we know what is really true? At a moment when alliance building and solidarity may be critical to our collective survival, when do we call in, when do we call out, and when do we cancel? Please bring your stories, your experiences, and your activism, as we review principles of alliance building from long term movement builders like Bernice Reagon, Loretta Ross, Joy Harjo, Thich Nhat Hanh and Fannie Lou Hamer.

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Women Drummers International
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Class Descriptions

Ava Square

West African Dance

All Levels

Come to class and move your body and spirit to a higher calling. Allow the drumming to touch your higher self. Release heaviness and embrace the lightness of movement. Connect to your inner guidance and know – SPIRIT MOVES US!

Avotcja (pronounced Avacha)

When Ancestors Speak Through Rhythm

All Levels

It is all about La Palabra Musical, The Music of the Word, the Rhythm that speaks in us & through us & our responsibility in using this most sacred of gifts wisely. Be ready to write, bring your instruments & be prepared to surrender your egos to each other & the Music of the Word. I want to unlock a waterfall of poetic metaphors as strong as any Rhythm you have ever heard played on the Drum & see where it takes us!!! I am ready, are you?

Carolyn Brandy

The Conga Drum!

This is an intermediate/advanced class. Students must have an understanding and be able to play rumba clave, palito, tumbadora, and tres dos (Segundo).

Some conga drums will be available.

Beginning Class (Saturday)

We will learn basic technique and sounds; how to sit and hold the drum; and a few simple rhythms to get us started with this charismatic drum. We will also learn some of the history of the development of this drum from Africa to Cuba to North America. We will practice the strokes in the rhythm Iyesa, a rhythm that originated in Nigeria and was preserved in Cuba. It is a beautiful, melodic rhythm with lots of songs.

Orisha Song Class (Sunday)

Orisha are the powers of nature. The mythology and culture of Orisha philosophy originates from the Yoruba people of Nigeria. Most of the songs praise the power of the wind, ocean, rivers, the herbs etc. Other songs tell the ancient stories from the mythology of the Orisha. Come join us to learn some of these beautiful songs and the rhythms that accompany them.

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Carolyn Brandy continued

Rumba is Life (Monday)

Intermediate

Rumba is fun, melodic, and energetic. The rhythm is one of the most beloved rhythms of Cuba and is deeply embedded in the culture and history of the island. In 1916, UNESCO inscribed Rumba on the list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

This is an intermediate/advanced class. Students must have an understanding and be able to play rumba clave, palito, tumbadora, and tres dos (Segundo).

Debbie Fier

Middle Eastern Percussion

All Levels

Come enjoy the wonderful connection that we will create in our circle of drummers! We will warm up and then move into learning drum technique and Middle-Eastern rhythms. Come enjoy the power of the drum!

Class is open to all levels. It is a basic skills class so is very accessible for beginners. Bring your dumbeks, riqqs, tars and hand percussion. All hand drums are also welcome! There will be a limited number of drums to borrow on a first come, first served basis.

Drums, Percussion & Rhythms of Morocco

We will begin with warming up our hands and drums and then dive into rhythms. We will build our rhythms and then explore percussion instruments unique to Morocco as we play. Come enjoy a deep dive into some beautiful trance rhythms!

Bring your dumbeks/darbukas, bendirs, tars (frame drums), Qrakebs – and, of course, other hand drums welcome. There will be a limited number of drums to borrow on a first come first serve basis.

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Women Drummers International
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Class Descriptions

Denise Solis & Ansarys Andino

Afro-Puerto Rican Bomba

Dancing the Drum (Friday and Saturday)

All Levels

In the tradition of Afro-Puerto Rican Bomba, the interaction/conversation between the dancer and the drummer is key. This is an improvised conversation and friendly challenge led by the dancer whose movements the lead drummer (Subidora(or) interprets. The dancer is inspired by the song and/or rhythm and enters the Batey (circle/cypher that Bomba happens in) and tells their story by way of their dance, an improvised set of movements that the lead drum person interprets in real time. Students will see this interaction modeled and learn how to start this conversation with the dancer in the Rhythms of Sica and Yuba. (With Denise Solis and Ansarys Andino)

Improvising language in 6/8 Bomba Rhythms (Sunday)

All Levels

El subidor me llama (Call and Response phrases on the drum)
Students will review 6/8 family of rhythms starting with Yuba, and other variations and then practice some intro language phrases with a call and response exercise between the Buleadoras (accompanying drum) and the Subidora (lead drum).

Bring your djembe, djuns, congas, hand percussion, etc. There will be extra djembes available on a first come, first served basis.

Elizabeth Sayre

The Batá Drum!

The batá drums of Cuba are part of the collective musical genius preserved and still developing in Afro-Cuban communities on the island and around the world.

The batá drums salute the revered forces of nature known as orisha (the crossroads, iron, the forest, the mountain, the wind, thunder & lightning, the river, the seas, etc.) and are part of a living spiritual tradition. They have also over time become part of the national cultural heritage of Cuba, and of the larger African diaspora.

A Crash Course in Havana-style Batá Drumming: You Could Get Hooked. (Saturday)

All Levels

This class will introduce a bit of history (or herstory–crucial in the case of the batá for women students and players), correct posture and hand technique, several fundamental rhythms (such as Lalubanche, Ogún, Yakotá, Egbado [Rumba Obatalá] or others) and possibly some orisha songs. We will cover different material in each class. I may take requests for what to teach, and tailor what we do according to who is in the circle.

Drum Conversations on the Batá: Are You Hooked Yet? (Sunday)

All Levels

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Elizabeth Sayre continued

Batá Drumming with Orisha Songs: I think You're Hooked by Now. (Monday)

Intermediate

Students at all levels are welcome: beginners will have a crash course in the batá; intermediate and advanced players can try a part or drum they have not played before.

At least one year of hand drum study and knowledge of 6/8 bell patterns/clave are recommended for the classes. The batá have their own hand technique (similar to congas and bongo) and require the constant development of listening and ensemble-playing skills.

Please bring batá drums (no other type of drum) and maracas (or a similar type of shaker with a handle and a clean sound). Some drums will be provided for those who don't have them!

Jeni Swerdlow

The Great Rhythm Revival

All Levels

A joyful drumming hootenanny for all styles, skill levels, and abilities!

Come raise a joyful rhythm ruckus as we reconnect with the pulse and celebrate the power of drumming together. Bring your favorite drum or percussion instrument—djembes, frame drums, buckets, shakers, bells, and beyond—all grooves and traditions welcome. We'll stir up a playful, life-affirming experience that refreshes the spirit, builds community, and reminds us how resilient we are when we unite in rhythm.

Katiana Vilá

Flamenco Rhythms

All Levels

Flamenco can be intimidating but I invite you all to explore its contagious and powerful energy with me. Palmas is the most fundamental part of flamenco and it is all you need to get a juerga started (flamenco jam). The best part about developing this hand clapping technique is that it is always with you, to practice and apply to other rhythms and music.

During our time together we will learn tangos and rumba rhythms in 4/4 and work our way up to 6/8 bulerias and 12/4 alegrias. I will even show you a few dance moves (baile) and a song (cante) we could sing to accompany our palmas and flamenco cheers (jaleo) like when people say óle! For those with cajon I will be teaching the basic patterns after we have gone over the palmas parts so be prepared to also clap! Vamos allá!

Palmas (that's clapping in flamenco lingo) and cajon if you have one, not required!

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Class Descriptions

Mabiba Baegne

Dunun (Bass Drums) from Guinea

All Levels

Those drums are the heart of the Malinke rhythm: the bass drum are made from hallowed tree trunks cut to a cylindrical shape and covered with cowhide at both end: the musician strikes the drum with a wooden stick on one hand, while the other hand simultaneously holds a metal stick that is used to strike an iron bell attached to the drum. The Dunun comes in three different sizes.

The names of the drums are: Kenkeni, the smallest and the keeper of the time; Sangban, the middle one is the heart; Dununba gives power and heat to the rhythm as well adding great rhythmic dimension; the bells bring another tonality and fill the space between the beats. In some regions they play one or two. Only in Kurussa and Kankan region, they play all three Dununs and bells.

West African and Congolese Dance with Live Drums

Madeleine Zayas

Hand Percussion/Vocal Workshop for Solo Singers

All Levels

A hands-on look at the different percussive small instruments that Bay Area singers use to accompany the song or to help to keep the rhythm/speed of it.

Some singers have taken to using hand percussion while they sing. The most common of them are the claves, the chekere, güiro, clapping hands, egg shakers, maracas and different kinds of skinned drums. In some cases, accompanying oneself with small percussion instruments provides the singer with confidence and helps maintain the swing, the flow, and enliven the song itself. In this workshop, we will explore how and when to use hand percussion instruments—specifically where to begin playing when a song starts, and when to stop playing as it draws to a close.

When playing these instruments, the vocalist must establish a vital rapport with the other percussionists in the band. Coordination is essential to avoid repetition and to ensure one does not clash with the central percussion section. The singer should be very careful not to step on—or overpower—the central percussion. Once you begin playing, your approach must be decisive, firm, and executed with great confidence.

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Women Drummers International
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Class Descriptions

Mar Stevens

Djembe Drum Meditation

All Levels

Open your morning with the drums in a spirit of meditation. Deepen your connection with the drum, the breath, and the healing that is manifested.

Bring your drums and percussion instruments. Loaner drums and percussion are available on a first come first serve basis. All are welcome to come and participate in the meditation. You can sit, lie, or stretch while listening to the drums.

Djembe "Solo" Vibrations

Intermediate

Come and experience the power of the drum through traditional West African rhythms. In this class, we will focus on a solo pattern to be played with a traditional rhythm. This class will help improve your speed, technique, timing, listening skills, and confidence as you solo.

Bring your djembe, djuns, congas, hand percussion, etc. There will be extra djembes available on a first come, first served basis.

Michaelle Goerlitz

Beginning Brazilian Batucada

Beginners Only

I will be introducing the various drums and percussion that are played in the escolas de samba in Rio. We'll explore the techniques, how the rhythms on each instrument fit with each other, and get down to playing some samba!

Northeastern Brazilian Rhythms

All Levels

We will explore the infectious rhythms used in Forro: Baiao, Coco, and Xaxado. Zabumba, triangle, pandeiro and caxixi are the basic instruments.

If you don't have one of these instruments then some will be provided.

Michaelle Goerlitz in Collaboration with Thaís Bezerra

Ensemble playing: groove and creation (Samba and Carnival Marchinhas)

In the final class, we will bring all the elements together in **ensemble playing**, experiencing the collective groove and the energy of playing in a group. Participants will engage with the music by **playing, singing, and dancing together**. The class will also introduce **simple tools for musical leadership**, encouraging creativity, connection, and the celebration of rhythm in community.

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Women Drummers International
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Class Descriptions

Neena McNair

Native American Drum

All Levels

We will be sharing songs and respect for the mother drum indigenous to the Great Plains. We will make drumsticks, while discussing the origin of materials, and share songs, rhythms and dances specific to this particular drum. Also, we will explore reasons women are called to this style of drumming and find another community of nurturing support. Please come share your knowledge and gather some, too.

Ouida Lewis

Echos of the Congo 1 - Kromanti Rootz

All Levels

Learn the history of the maroons, a resilient people with Rhythms which survived the test of time.

Echos of the Congo 2 - Tambu Rhythm and Songs

All Levels

From Africa to Jamaica and back: A deep dive into the Jamaican Congolese TAMBU!

Afro-Caribbean Rootz - Drumversations

All Levels

Reconnecting with internal Joy, creating meaningful dialogue using the language of the drums with the rhythms of the heart. Feeling the four.

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Women Drummers International
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Class Descriptions

Qween Hollins

Making Gris-gris/ Mojo bags. Remembering the Powerful Indigeneity

All Levels

Mojo bag, also known as a gris-gris or conjure bag are used in African American folk magic practices, in the form of resistance, protection, healing and liberation. It serves as a portable amulet or charm. The items inside are carefully chosen and charged with the intention that you place upon them.

Purpose: Gris gris, Mojo bags are used to hold and manifest intentions. They are essentially a "prayer in a bag"! Common ingredients include herbs, roots, crystals, small personal items, and written intentions. ***Some craft materials will be provided.*** *If you have crafts to share, please bring them.*

What to bring: *Items that we can bring to share for making Gris-gris / Mojo (talisman) bags. Oftentimes we have some of these items just lying around the house and don't know what to do with the: twine | ribbon | yarn of all colors | crystals | dried herbs that you would like to share | seeds of all kinds | dry bird seed would be great | pieces of leather that we can make strips from | fabrics of all kinds | buttons | burlap | shells that we can string | bells that we can string | pieces of copper wire | and lastly something that you would like to put on or in your bag that is special to you.*

And if you want to bring something that you think would be nice to share that's not on this list, please feel free to do so thank you so much! We're going to have a great time! And there is no experience necessary, no age limit, just bring an open mind and an open heart!
Blessings Queen

West African Dance with Live Drums

Come sweat it all out and feel the joy and majesty of dancing with live drummers. Born To Drum has great drummers and this class will be a lot of fun for dancers and drummers alike.

Crown Making & Grandmothers Circle: Cancelled

Qween is unable to stay at BTD 2026 until Monday July 20 and teach this workshop.
See: Tara Crowfoot Shannon's *Grief Circle/Workshop*.

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Women Drummers International
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Class Descriptions

Rebecca Rose Rodríguez

Salsa Rhythms 1

Beginning

Rebecca offers a percussion workshop based around Afro-Cuban percussion especially for beginning students. This class will explore basic salsa rhythms. We will learn the clave and basic Tumbao rhythms for conga, bongó, timbales, maraca, güiro, time permitting. Once we learn each pattern, we will layer together the Cuban rhythm section! students will be able to sing and dance to the music and explore our creativity!

Salsa Rhythms 2

Intermediate

Rebecca offers a percussion workshop based around Afro-Cuban percussion. This class will teach how to play basic salsa rhythms. We will explore the clave, conga, bongó, chekere, maraca, güiro, and timbales and layer each pattern into a few salsa grooves. Students will be able to learn and play each instrument and incorporate rhythmic independence through each pattern. Once we learn each pattern and layer together the Cuban rhythm sections, students will be able to sing and dance to the music and explore our creativity!

Rita Hargrave

The Last Mambo: Beats That Move Us

All Levels

"The Last Mambo" is a feature documentary film that explores the unique heritage of the San Francisco Bay Area Salsa and Latin Jazz community. *The Last Mambo* profiles how this network of musicians created innovative approaches to Afro-Cuban based music. *The Last Mambo* profiles the performers and participants who transformed the art form into a social movement dedicated to integration, cultural preservation and music education.

- describes how the cultural traditions of the Latino and African American individuals who migrated to Oakland and San Francisco for work and new opportunities during the WWII first melded into an entirely new expression
- highlights how the Bay Area's distinctive sound exploded into the national consciousness
- explores how immigration and cultural exchange can bring together diverse cultures into an artistically rich, vibrant community
- underscores the impact that music and dance can have on both individuals and society at large

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Women Drummers International
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Class Descriptions

Sena Kugbega

Drums, Dance, Songs and Culture from Ghana

All Levels

Drums, Dance, Songs and Culture **f**rom Ghana**.** This class will include basic drum rhythms and songs from Ghana with some history of what they are used for. We will also will learn the dance that goes with the dance. This is an opportunity to put the drum, dance and song together.

Sheree Seretse

Welcome to the World of Zimbabwean Marimba Music

All Levels

The ensemble of instruments is comprised of sopranos, tenors, baritones and bass marimbas. The class will include an introduction and cultural perspective. The workshop will not use written notation. It will draw upon your listening and visual skills. The music is made of short repetitive melodies and rhythms which interact to create polyphonic and polyrhythmic sounds and melodies. If you can hone into those skills and use your hands you can play the marimba. Come make a joyful sound with this infectious music. Each session will focus on a different song.

Sue Kaye (Suki)

African Caribbean Styles and Techniques

Beginners

We will work on getting good sound out of the drum, and exercises and rhythms to develop balance and timing at the same time as exploring traditional and social styles of percussion played in music of the African diaspora. Congas, ngomas, djembes, bells, sticks, shakers, etc. can all be included!

Congo to Cuba

All Levels

We will work on getting good sound out of the drum, and exercises and rhythms to develop balance and timing at the same time as exploring traditional and social styles of percussion played in music of the African diaspora. Congas, ngomas, djembes, bells, sticks, shakers, etc. can all be included!

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Women Drummers International
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Class Descriptions

Susu Pampanin and Amina Goodyear

Amina Goodyear will be co-teaching the classes with Susu.

Middle Eastern Drumming

Beginners and Intermediate (Technique class for newer players, but everyone is welcome!)

Great class for new players and players looking to learn to make great sounds or review technique on the drum (dumbek, darbuka, Egyptian tabla), frame drum, riq (Arabic tambourine), and finger cymbals. We will go slow and do drills and introduce a few of the most important rhythms found in Middle Eastern music.

Bring instrument of your choice. We will provide finger cymbals for all and a few drums and frame drums.

Middle Eastern Drum Rhythms

Mixed Level (faster pace)

We will review technique to make clear sounds and add drills for accent sounds and short rolls. We will focus on the Balady family of rhythms and also work on transitions into 2/4 rhythms.

Bring instrument of your choice. Finger cymbals and a few drums and frame drums will be provided.

Middle Eastern Rhythm Jam and Improv Class

Mixed Level

Great class for experienced players ready to take their jam to the next level. We will learn/review a few of the most commonly used rhythms in Middle Eastern music. We will do speed building exercises and lots of technique and rhythm drills.

We will do a quick technique review, but our main focus will be jamming in the feel and flow of the groove. Some players may choose hold the rhythm, but for players that wish to improvise, we will learn to add short rolls and fills to spice up and enhance your rhythms, and solos. Any rhythm request will be accommodated!

Bring instrument of your choice.

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Women Drummers International
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Class Descriptions

Tanee Osborne

West African Drumming

All Levels

A very beginner friendly exploration into West African Drumming. With the use of Djembes and Dunduns I will introduce the “ABC’s” of an ancestral language of love we can all learn to hear and use to bring joy and unity. This workshop will touch on history, technique basics, and deepen the understanding of the conversation happening between the drums as well as a moment to be free and release.

Zero experience is required and all levels welcomed.

Ballet/Performance Dundun & Djembe: Intro to Breaks & Performance Intros

Intermediate/Advanced

This class is for the players that already have the basics down and are looking for a little challenge. We will explore an learn an extended performance break/intro. Both djembe and dun-dun players are welcome.

Tara Crowfoot Shannon

Grief Circle/Workshop

All Levels

Grief circle/workshop somatic embodiment with sacred prayer.

Thaís Bezerra

Tá no Batuque: Brazilian Rhythms — play, dance, sing, and smile

All Levels

This joyful, hands-on workshop introduces the Tá no Batuque methodology and the vibrant world of Brazilian rhythms through three simple steps: rhythmic immersion, section-based learning, and ensemble playing. Together, we’ll explore accessible arrangements inspired by ijexá, samba, baião, carnival marchinhas, and more.

Participants will experience the music from the inside: playing, moving, singing, and building groove as a group. Along the way, they will learn core rhythmic patterns, variations, and practical tools for leading percussion ensembles in both educational and performance settings.

Come ready to connect, create, and celebrate rhythm together.

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Thaís Bezerra continued

*Rhythmic immersion: body, dance, and rhythmic claves (*Ijexá*)*

All Levels

The first class begins with **the dance of the rhythm**, allowing participants to feel the pulse and groove before playing. We will then explore the **rhythmic clave in the body**, using clapping, dance, and movement to understand the structure of the rhythm in an intuitive and collective way. This stage helps participants internalize the groove and develop listening skills. From there, we will move to **voice and instruments**, applying the rhythmic clave of ijexá.

From Xote to Galope

All Levels

In the second class, we will begin by applying the **rhythmic claves from the body to the instruments available**, organizing the group into different rhythmic. Since instruments may vary depending on what participants bring, the patterns will be **adapted to different percussion instruments**, while maintaining the essence of the rhythms. We will explore arrangements inspired by the **northeastern Brazilian rhythms xote and galope**.

Thaís Bezerra in Collaboration with Michaelle Goerlitz

Ensemble playing: groove and creation (Samba and Carnival Marchinhas)

All Levels

In the final class, we will bring all the elements together in **ensemble playing**, experiencing the collective groove and the energy of playing in a group. Participants will engage with the music by **playing, singing, and dancing together**. The class will also introduce **simple tools for musical leadership**, encouraging creativity, connection, and the celebration of rhythm in community.

Trinity Watkins

Kundalini Yoga

All Levels

A typical Kundalini yoga class can be comprised of 3-6 parts: an opening chant (known as “tuning in”) followed by a brief warm-up for your spine, a kriya (which is a sequence of postures paired with breathing techniques), and a closing meditation or song.”

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