



The Yoruba God of Drumming: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Wood That Talks

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As one of the salient forces in the ritual life of those who worship the pre-Christian and Muslim deities called orishas, the Yorùbá god of drumming, known as Àyàn in Africa and Añá in Cuba, is variously described as the orisha of drumming, the spirit of the wood, or the more obscure Yorùbá praise name AsòròIgi (Wood That Talks). With the growing global importance of orisha religion and music, the consequence of this deity's power for devotees continually reveals itself in new constellations of meaning as a sacred drum of Nigeria and Cuba finds new diasporas.

Despite the growing volume of literature about the orishas, surprisingly little has been published about the ubiquitous Yorùbá music spirit. Yet wherever one hears drumming for the orishas, Àyàn or Añá is nearby. This groundbreaking collection addresses the gap in the research with contributions from a cross-section of prestigious musicians, scholars, and priests from Nigeria, the Americas, and Europe who have dedicated themselves to studying Yorùbá sacred drums and the god sealed within. As well as offering multidisciplinary scholarly insights from transatlantic researchers, the volume includes compelling first-hand accounts from drummer-priests who were themselves history-makers in Nigerian and Cuban diasporas in the United States, Venezuela, and Brazil. This collaboration between diverse scholars and practitioners constitutes an innovative approach, where differing registers of knowledge converge to portray the many faces and voices of a single god.

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