

# N' Gri / Kirin / Wassolonka / Wassulunke / Bougouninka (Bubuninca)

WAP-pages / Paul Nas / Last updated on 12 February 2008

N'Gri is a rhythm from the Bambara (or Bamana) people of the Wassolon region in Guinea and Mali. where it is normally played with only two drums. There are several ideas about the origin and the use of it. Some say that it is traditionally used to be played by the *feticheurs* (magicians). Others say it is a ritme played at the end of harvest (Serge Blanc). According a guy named Jeremy N'Gri means something like 'Jump' in the Bambara language because one of the main hallmark dance steps during the middle part of N'Gri is a jumping step. It has a very specific solo that is speaking Bambara history about Kumba Sidibe and her pregnancy.

The rhythm starts slowly and its tempo is rising continuously going on to a climax. The solo is very specific and N'Gri has 4 stages from slow to fastest. The 4 parts in order are called: *Sensen - N'Gri - Kolonbri - Jebenije*. The djembé solo's are played more and more intensely as well.

Wassolon is a region that is a part of Guinea and Mali as well, Wassulunke or Wassolonka means 'a person from Wassolon'

The rhythm is also known as *Kirin*. On the CD Bamako Foli from Rainer Polak you can hear the song 'n'i den t'i bolo' (If you have no child).

Wasulun music uses the same pentatonic scale as most Bambara music, which makes it easy to integrate Wasulun into the Bambara repertoire.

Most Wasulun singers know how to sing Bamana songs and vice versa.

The piece is also known as *Bubuninca*. It is also a krin-piece on Mamady's CD Nankama. Probably it's a matter of mispronouncing / misspelling: Rainer Polak thinks *Bubuni* should be *Bougouni*. So *Bubuninca* should be spelled *Bougouninka* (french) or *Buguninka* (Manding) and means 'man/woman from Bougounin'. Be ware that micro timing is important in N'Gri so try and find (Mali) music for more understanding. You could say that N'Gri evolves from a 'swung binary' to ternary. Therefore even more than in other parts of these WAP-pages the notation is no more than a small help in understanding a rhythm.

Call	T:Tt	T:T	T:T:	T:
	f:l r	l:r	r:l	r:
sangban				■

Basic patterns for two drums (here doundoun and sangban):

sangban	•	•	•	•
doundoun	•	•	•	•
	x	x	x	x

Basic pattern for one drum (here sangban):

Sangban	•	○	•	○	•
	x	x	x	x	x

## Accompanying bassdrum patterns

Martin Bernhard (Bubuninca), Mamady Keita (Wassolonka):

1a	•	•	•	•
Kenkeni/doundoun	x	x	x	x

and

1b	•	•	•	•
Kenkeni/doundoun	x	x	x	x

Stephan Rigert (Wasolonka), Serge Blanc (Wasulunke):

2a	•	•	•	•
	x	x	x	x
Kenkeni/doundoun	x	x	x	x

2b	•	•	•	•
Kenkeni/doundoun	x	x	x	x

Sometimes the echauffement is played in the fast part all the time.

Sangban	•	•	•	•
echauffement	x	x	x	x

Djembé 1	S	S	T	T	S	S	T	T
	r	r	r	l	r	r	r	l

Djembé 2	S	T	S	B	S	T	S	B
	r	r	l	l	r	r	l	l

Djembé 3	S	>	S	T	>	T	S	>	S	T	>	T
	r	>	r	l	>	r	l	>	r	l	>	r

Djembé 4	T	S	T	T	S	S	T
(N'Gri melody)	r	d	r	l	d	d	l

Djembé 5	S	T	T	S	S	B	S	T	T	S	S	B
	r	l	r	l	r	l	r	l	r	l	r	l

Djembé	T	T	S	S	T	T	S	S
solo accomp.1	l	r	r	l	l	r	r	l

### Sources

Lessons from Martin Bernhard and Drissa Koné.

Written material: Ushi Bilmeier / Mamady Keita: 'A Life for the Djembé',

Serge Blanc: 'Le Tambour Djembé', Anton Kamp: 'West Afrikaanse

Percussie', Rob den Brasem, 'West Afrikaanse en Cubaanse Drum ritmes',

Stephan Rigert: 'Djembé rhythmten aus Mali', Rafael Kronberger: YAPPages.