

Sounou

WAP-pages / Paul Nas / Last updated on 2 August 2005

Sounou (Sunu, Sunun) is a rhythm from the Kassouke-people from the Kayes-region in Mali. 'It is played as competition-dance-rhythm for young men' (Mamady Keita). 'It 's a popular rhythm dating from the pre colonial era. In that period once lived a pretty girl called Sounou Mamady in the village Sagabari. She was know for her dancing qualities and participated on any dance festival that was organized. The rhythm is made by the Djembéfola from her village honoring this girl Sounou Mamady. The dance is presented after a good harvest. The girls can practise their grace, beauty and sometimes seduction. For the young men (especially Kaarta) a opportunity to show their strenght and vitality while making all sorts of acrobatic jumps' (Serge Blanc). Now Sounou is a rhythm often played all over West Africa. No wonder there are many interpretations and variations. Some people speak of the 'Guinea-Sounou' and the 'Mali-Sounou'. The difference could involve the placing of a bass-drum-hit on the 7th (Guinea) or 8th (Mali) pulse. Although patterns for the duns can be found for different bassdrums, the melody of these drums together characterize the Sounou melody . In Mali usually only two drums are in used, so the Kenkeni is often added (by the Malinke, who sometimes play with three drums) and in different patterns possible to play.

Source 1: Ushi Billmeyer: 'Mamady Keita, A Life for the Djembé'

Kenkeni	●			●			●			●			●		
	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x

Sangban	●				●		●						●		
	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x

Doundoun	●	●	●		○			○		○			■		
	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x

Djembé 1	T	S	S		S	T	T	S	S	B	S	T			
	r	:	r	l	:	r	l	r	r	l	r	r	l	:	r

Djembé 2	S		S	S	T	T	S		S	S	T	T			
	r	:	l	r	r	l	r	:	l	r	r	l	:	r	l

Source 2: Lessons by Jaco Benders / Martin Bernhard

Kenkeni 1 high	●			●			●			●			●		
	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x

Kenkeni 2 low	●				●		●						●		
	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x

Sangban					●			●			●				
	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x

Doundoun	●	●	●												■
	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x	x	:	x

Source 3: Serge Blanc: 'Le Tambour Djembé'

Kenkeni				●	●					●	●				
				x	x					x	x				

Combi sangban					○			○			○				
doundoun	●	●	●												■

Djembé 1	T	S	S		B	S	T	T	S	S	B	S	T		
	r	:	r	l	:	l	r	l	r	r	l	r	l	:	r

Djembé 2			T	T		S	S		T	T		S	S		
			r	l	:	r	l	:	r	l	:	r	l	:	r

Source 4: Analysis Mamoudou Kante, CD 'Drums of Mali'

Sangban	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

	●	●	○	○	○	■
	x	x	x	x	x	x

Source 5: Analysis CD 'Bamako foli' by Rainer Polak

Combi sangban	●	○	○	■			
doundoun	●	●	●				
bel	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Source 6 (Age Delbanco, from Fred Simpson)

Kenkeni	●	●	●	●			
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Sangban	●	○	●	●	○	●	
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Doundoun	○	●	●	●	●	●	●
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

	●	●	○	○	○		
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

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

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

Source 7 Michael Wall in Internet discussion (his 1ste source) (slow part)

High Doun	○	●	●	●	○	●	●
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Low Doun	●	●	●	●	○	○	●
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Source 8: Michael Wall in Internet discussion (zijn 2de source) Analysis CD 'Donkili', Festival Music from Mali (on the CD there ar no bells) (slow part)

Sangban	●	●	●	●	●	●
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Doundoun	●	●	●	●	○	○	●
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Source 9: Stephan Rigert: 'Djembe rhythmten aus Mali'

Kenkeni	●	●	●	●
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Sangban	●	●	○	○	○	●	
	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Doundoun	○	●	●	○	○	○
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Sangban	●	●	●	●	○	○	●
variation 1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x

Sangban	●	●	○	○	○	●
variation 2	x	x:x	x	x:x	x	x

Sangban	●	●●	○	●	●●	●
variation 3	x	x:x	x	x	x:x	x

Two other djembé patterns.

Djembé a	T	S:S	B	S:T	T	S:S	B	S	T
	r	r:l	l	r:l	r	r:l	r	r:l	

Djembé b	T	S:S	B	S:T	T	S:S	B	S:T
	r	r:l	l	r:l	r	r:l	l	r:l

Break					B	S	T	T	S	B
					r	l	r	l	f	l

	B	B:B	T	T	T	S	S	S	T	B
3x	r	r:l	2	r	l	r	l	r	l	l

	B	B:B	T	T	T	S	B	S	S	S
	r	r:l	2	r	l	r	l	2	r	l

	S	S	S	T	S	T	T	S	S	T	S
	r	l	r	r	l	r	l	r	l	r	f

	S	S	S	S	S	S	T	T	S
	f	f	f	f	f	r	l	r	f

	T	T	S	T	T	S	T	S	T	T	S
	r	l	r	l	r	l	r	r	l	r	l

Break for douns

	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	
	f	r	l	l	r	r	r	
doundoun								●

	●	●●		●	●	●	●	
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	●	●●		●	●	●	●	
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doundoun	●	●●						
sangban			●		●		●	

Break for closing the rhythm

	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	
	f	r	l	l	r	r	r	
doundoun								●

	●	●●		●	●	●	●	
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	●	●●		●	●	●	●	
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	●	●●						
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Djembé solo											B	S	S	S	S
phrase 1												l	2:r	l	r

	S	S	T	T	S	T	T	S	T	S	T	T	S	B
	l	r	r	l	r	l	r	l	l	r	l	r	l	r

	B	S	S		S	T	S		B
	l	r			d	r	d		l

	B	S	S	T	T	S	T	T	S	B
	r	r	l	r	l	r	r	l	r	l

	B	S	S	S	T	S	S		B
	r	r	l	r	l	2:r	l	r	l

repeat	B	S	S	S	T	S	S		B
phrase 2	r	r	l	r	l	2:r	l	r	l

repeat	T	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	S	T
phrase 3	r	l	r	l	r	l	r	l	r	l

end	T	T	S	T	T	S	T	T	S	S	
phrase 4	r	l	r	l	r	l	r	r	l	r	f

Sources

Lessons: Martin Bernhard, Jaco Benders, Mamoudou 'Delmundo' Keita
 Written material: Mamady Keita (/ Ushi Billmeyer). Åge Delbanco, Serge Blanc, Stephan Rigert, Paul Janse, Larry Morris, Rafaël Kronberger, Michael Wall. CD: Mamoudou Kante, Rainer Polak