

# Kristen Arant

Drumlady LLC

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## **Education:**

Truman State University, Kirksville, MO  
oboe performance major

1993-1995

University of Missouri, Columbia, MO  
Bachelor of Arts-Music  
Interdisciplinary Studies (English, journalism, women studies)

1995-1999

## **Projects, Bands, Collectives**

### **Hands on Drums**

2015 - present

Founded pop-up store and community space in DC featuring the work of Ghana craft makers. Received grant money and pop-up space in Ivy City for 3 months; facilitated three consecutive moves since the first location; secured funding and materials; taught drum classes to all ages; organized and ran community **events; lead promotional efforts; booked artists to teach and perform in the space.**

### **Drumming Up From Poverty/Oma Senya Cultural Center, Ghana**

2010 - present

Since 2010, I've been fundraising and cultivating support for this project which empowers street children in Ghana by teaching them traditional drumming, dancing, and drum building arts. This project was the impetus for creating the Hands on Drums shop, so there would be a place for the drums and crafts created in Ghana to be heralded and sold, in order to send support back to build the project. Since I began working on the project, an acre of land has been obtained, and an arts and culture center built, and I have led 5 tours of Americans to Ghana.

### **Marsha and The Positrons**

2015 - present

DC-based kindie (kids indie) band Marsha and the Positrons play fun songs about science and how the world works. (djembe, cajon and harmony vocals.)

### **The Bele Bele Rhythm Collective, Founder and Director (BBRC)**

2008 – present

The Bele Bele Rhythm Collective is an intergenerational group of women from DC & surrounding areas who have come together to form a sisterhood of the drum. My role as director is to create and arrange music; teach said music to women, along with West African drumming techniques; pursue opportunities to perform and promote the group to the public; and lead weekly rehearsals and regular performances. (djembe, vocals, percussion)

### **Akoma @ All Souls, Director**

2014 - present

Akoma @ All Souls is a partnership with West African drumming ensemble, Akoma Drummers. Under the direction of Kristen Arant, the program gives an introduction to a variety of West African percussion instruments and their accompanying polyrhythms and songs.

### **Akoma Drummers, co-Founder**

2010 – 2015

The Akoma Drummers proudly study and present music of the African diaspora - the origin of all people and all music - ranging from traditional West African to funk and DC's own go-go. The group plays djembe, kpanlogo, conga and dunun drums with dancing and songs.

**Rhythm Workers Union, co-founder** 2001 – 2009  
 Activist rhythm ensemble, renown for showing up at large demonstrations with a moving drum cart called the "MotherDrumShip." (various percussion)

**OmegaBand** 2007 — 2010  
 DC Funk band featuring original songs spanning funk, soul, ska and rock, led by Erika Betts (djembe, congas, bells, tambourine)

**American Balalaika Symphony** 2004 – 2006  
 Russian symphony orchestra based in Arlington, VA (oboe)

**Malcolm X Drummers and Dancers** 2000 – 2002  
 30-year-old loosely formed ensemble of drummers and dancers who play at DC's famous Sunday drum circle in Malcolm X Park, and perform at events on request (djembe)

**Notable performance venues:**

WPFW Live @ 5, The National Cathedral, Merriweather Post Pavilion, The Hamilton, NPR Studios, The State Theatre, Falls Church, VA, The National Portrait Gallery, The Smithsonian Museum of African Art, The Kennedy Center

**Recordings:**

**Marsha and the Positrons, "Positronic"** 2018  
 djembe, percussion  
**Linette Tobin's Pangaea, "The New Shape of the World"** 2018  
 djembe and dun-un on "Make way for the Ladies"  
**Bele Bele Rhythm Collective, "Roots"** 2017  
 lead djembe and vocals, arrangements and rhythm creation  
**Sweet Honey in the Rock, "#LoveinEvolution"** 2016  
 djembe solo on track "sweet sweet honey"  
**Imani White, "They Dreamt of Us"** 2005-2009  
 Percussion, vocals  
**OmegaBand, In Through the Navel,** 2009  
 Percussion  
**Shahid Buttar, Get Out of Your Chair,** 2006  
 Drum, vocal, flute, oboe, vocal arrangement  
**Jeff Mueller & Kristen Arant, Brilliant Blue** 1997  
 Oboe & English Horn

**Honors:**

Received Creative Spark Grant (\$3000) DCCAH 2018, '19  
 Received Teaching Artist Fellowship (\$7000) DCCAH 2017  
 Received new pop up store space (Rhode Island Ave) from Recreative Spaces 2016  
 Received 5,000 grant and 3-month pop store (Ivy City) from Cultural DC 2015  
 Received Rex Foundation Award (\$5,000) for YWDEP 2012  
 Received Common Folk Award from One Common Unity 2010  
 Certified by the Maryland Teaching Artist Institute 2010  
 Apprentice to master drummer Ubaka Hill – Michigan Women's Music Festival 2008  
 Awarded Artist Fellowship (DCCAH) 2008, '10, '12, '17  
 Folk & Traditional Arts Mini-Grant Recipient (DCCAH) 2006, '07, '08  
 Small Projects Grant Recipient (DCCAH) 2006, '07, '08  
 Young Artist Community Services Program Grant Recipient (DCCAH) 2005 & 2006

## **Teaching:**

### **Lee Montessori PCS, Washington, DC**

2016 — present

Began teaching a drum club at Lee Montessori in 2016; In 2017, secured grant funding for a rhythm exploration workshop series for upper elementary students; In 2018 began teaching music 8 hours per week to primary and elementary students; In 2019; began teaching music 30 hours per week to primary and elementary students.

### **Teaching included the following:**

- o Creating interesting, culturally relevant and portable curricula
- o Securing portable instruments for students to learn
- o Learning new instruments (guitar, piano)
- o Classroom management, with the added challenge of having to manage students without a classroom of my own
- o Trainings in social-emotional and trauma-informed education
- o Arranging and leading performance pieces
- o Working 1-on-1 with students, and in groups ranging from 6-23 students
- o Creating and teaching online curricula during the COVID-19 pandemic

### **DrumLady.com**

2006 – present

Teach and facilitate private and group workshops in drumming, percussion, singing and general music at homes, schools, youth centers, businesses, conferences and organizations throughout the DC metro area and the mid-Atlantic region.

Teaching includes the following weekly posts:

- o West African drumming instructor for the Washington Waldorf High School, 2014-2019
- o Leader of Akoma @ All Souls drumming ensemble, All Souls Church, 2013-present
- o Weekly classes for adults and kids held at Roda Movements studio, 2008-present
- o Online classes via Zoom and Facebook Live, 2020-present

### **Young Women's Drumming Empowerment Project, Founder & Director**

2005 – 2018

The Young Women's Drumming Empowerment Project (YWDEP) gives rise to young women's self esteem, positive development, and creative self-expression through drumming, poetry, movement, song, and performance.

As the Founder & Director my duties included:

- o Program Design, Implementation and assessment
- o Management of program staff, interns and apprentices
- o Writing/co-writing grant proposals
- o Performing and/or delegating outreach and publicity tasks
- o Designing and teaching drumming curriculum
- o Lead teacher in West African drumming and song
- o Acting as Artistic Director

### **Drumming Empowerment Programs:**

Drumming Empowerment (created by myself) teaches West African drumming as a tool for redirecting rage, increasing focus, enhancing self-expression and channeling emotion, as well as cultivating a connection to the style of drumming that eventually led to the creation of all popular music in America: gospel, blues, jazz, country, rock, hip-hop and more. The following is a sampling of locations where I taught a series of workshops to students. This list is around 75% complete, and does not include the countless workshops I've led with adults:

Montessori School of McLean, McLean, Virginia  
**Langley Elementary School, Washington, DC**  
Youth Build PCS, Washington, DC

2020  
**2020**  
2020

<b>St Stephen's &amp; St Agnes School, Alexandria, VA</b>	<b>2019</b>
Weller Road Elementary School, Silver Spring, MD	2019
<b>Powell Elementary School, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
Woodlin Elementary School, Silver Spring, MD	2018
<b>Lee Montessori PCS, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2017-present</b>
Parkside Middle School, Manassas, VA	2018
<b>F.H. Fauntroy Community Center, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2017</b>
Chance Academy, Washington, DC	2017
<b>DC Prep Academy, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2017</b>
Yu Ying PCS, Washington, DC	2017
<b>Inspired Teaching School, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2017</b>
Jack & Jill Playgroups	2017
<b>Little Friends for Peace</b>	<b>2016-present</b>
DC General Family Shelter	2016
<b>Capital City Charter School, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2016-2018</b>
Melvin J. Berman Academy, Washington, DC	2015
<b>Washington Waldorf School, Bethesda, MD (high school faculty)</b>	<b>2014-present</b>
Paul Public Charter School, Washington, DC	2014
<b>GALA Hispanic Theatre summer camp, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2014</b>
Mt Vernon Community School, Alexandria, VA	2013
<b>Sheridan School, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2013-2015</b>
Evergreen Montessori School, Silver Spring, MD	2012-2014
<b>Harriet Tubman Elementary School, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2012-2013</b>
Center City Charter School, Washington, DC	2012-2013
<b>American University</b>	<b>2014-2017</b>
University of Maryland	2013-present
<b>Rayner Browne Academy, Baltimore, MD</b>	<b>2011-2012</b>
Hart Middle School, Washington, DC	2011-2012
<b>DC Scores, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2011</b>
Tench Tilghman Elementary Middle School, Baltimore, MD	2010-2012
<b>Takoma Education Center, Takoma, DC</b>	<b>2010</b>
Beacon House, Washington, DC	2010
<b>Girl Scouts, Stone Mill Elementary, Potomac, MD</b>	<b>2010</b>
PULSE Performing Arts Project, Kilmer Middle School, Vienna, VA	2010
<b>Imagine Hope Community Charter School, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2010</b>
Kipp DC PCS, Washington, DC	2010
<b>National Cultural Center, Accra, Ghana, West Africa</b>	<b>2010</b>
Capitol Hill Day School, Washington, DC	2009
<b>Thurgood Marshall Academy PCS, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2009</b>
Lifepieces to Masterpieces, Washington, DC	2009
<b>Levine School of Music, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2009</b>
Anne Arundel Community College (adjunct faculty), Annapolis, MD	2008-2012
<b>Freedom Schools Academy, Knoxville, TN</b>	<b>2008-2010</b>
Passion 4 Learning, Strathmore Elementary School, Rockville, MD	2008-2009
<b>MEI Futures Academy PCS, NE Washington, DC</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>
Girls, Inc., Trinidad Recreation Center, NE Washington, DC	2008
<b>Revel Youth Shine, Browne Junior High School, NE Washington, DC</b>	<b>2008</b>
Rock Creek Valley Elementary School, Rockville, MD	2008
<b>Latin American Youth Center's Multicultural Summer Youth Program, DC</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>
Piney Branch Elementary School, Takoma Park, MD	2007
<b>African Immigrants and Refugees Foundation/Cardozo High School, DC</b>	<b>2007</b>
Sasha Bruce Youthwork's Project HYPE, Washington, DC	2007
<b>COEUS International School, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>
Sasha Bruce Summer Enrichment Program, Washington, DC	2006-2009
<b>Cesar Chavez Charter School for Public Policy, Washington, DC</b>	<b>2006</b>
Catholic University, Washington, DC	2006
<b>Wells College, Aurora, NY</b>	<b>2006</b>

### **Continuing Education:**

Positive Discipline Training for Montessori	2020
Trauma-Informed Practices 101	2019
Teaching Artist Institute Seminar I: Bringing Your Art into the Classroom	2009
Children & Youth Investment Trust Corporation 30-hour Training: "Advancing Youth Development," (Washington, DC)	2008

**Private Study:**

Sven Abow, guitar	2018-present
Traditional Kpanlogo and xylophone lessons (Arts Center, Accra, Ghana)	2010, 2011
Mahiri Keita, advanced Malinke drum technique	2009
Jason Walker, individual Latin Conga lessons	2008
Baile McKnight of Balie's African Drum Works, individual djembe lessons	2006-2007
Tammi Hessen (student of Mamady Keita of the Tam Tam Mandingue), private djembe lessons	2005
Professional Oboists (St. Louis & Columbia, MO), classical oboe lessons	1987-1999

**Group Study:**

Group study with drum master Afia Walking Tree	2017, 2018
Group study with Malinke drum master Monette Marino	2015, 2016, 2017
Group study with Dr. Djo Bi, Ivory Coast drum master	2015
Individual and group study with multiple masters in Ghana, West Africa	2011, 2014
Mini-Guinea 2-week West African Drumming Intensive w/ Mamady Keita and Famadou Konate (San Diego, CA)	2011
Advanced level djembe workshops with Mamady Keita (Baltimore, MD)	2009
Mini-Guinea 2-week West African drumming intensive with Mamady Keita (San Diego, CA)	2008
2 <sup>nd</sup> Annual Drum Circle Facilitators Conference Drum Circle Facilitation (NC)	2007
Mahiri Keita of Tam Tam Mandingue West African Drumming School (MD)	2006-2008
Edwina Lee Tyler and Ubaka Hill West African drumming (Woodstock, NY)	2005
Tammi Hessen West African Mandingue drumming (Takoma Park, MD)	2005
Mamady Keita West African drumming workshop (Mt. Rainier, MD)	2005