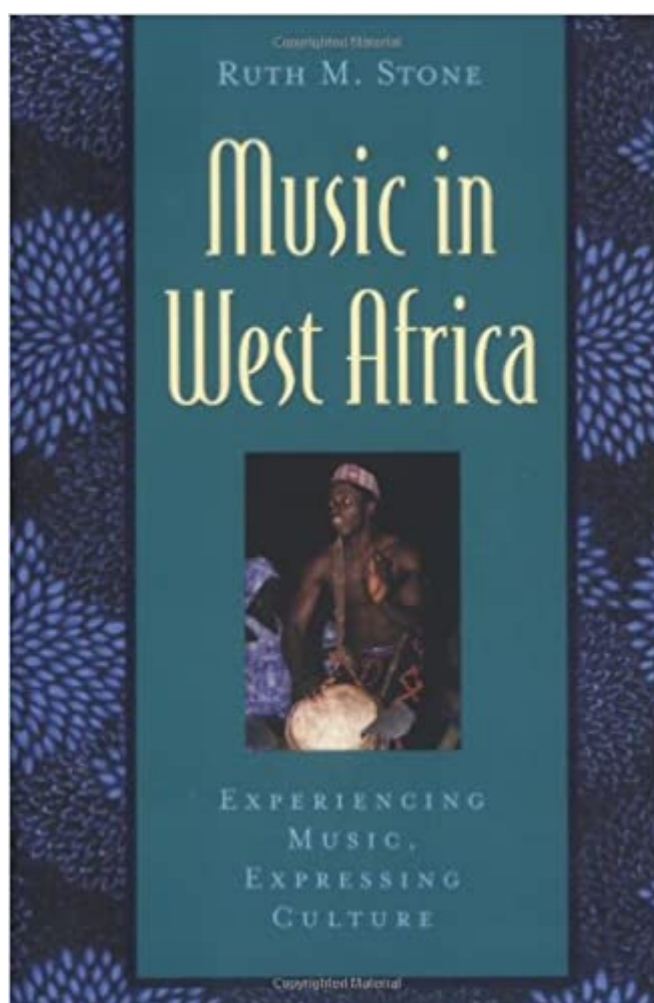


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# Music In West Africa: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture (Global Music Series)



## Synopsis

Music in West Africa is one of several case-study volumes that can be used along with *Thinking Musically*, the core book in the Global Music Series. *Thinking Musically* incorporates music from many diverse cultures and establishes the framework for exploring the practice of music around the world. It sets the stage for an array of case-study volumes, each of which focuses on a single area of the world. Each case study uses the contemporary musical situation as a point of departure, covering historical information and traditions as they relate to the present. Visit [www.oup.com/us/globalmusic](http://www.oup.com/us/globalmusic) for a list of case studies in the Global Music Series. The website also includes instructional materials to accompany each study. *Music in West Africa* presents fundamental style concepts of West African music using a focused case study of performance in Liberia, West Africa, among the Kpelle people. The book discusses the diversity, motifs, and structure of West African music within the larger patterns of the region's culture, highlighting those aspects of Kpelle music that are common to many other West African traditions. It also describes how music and dance in West Africa are tied to the fabric of everyday social and political life. Kpelle musicians value musical performance where multiple performers each contribute aspects of sound that fit together in elaborate ways. Drawing upon her extensive fieldwork and research, author Ruth Stone--who was raised in the Bong County region of Liberia--centers on key stylistic elements that Kpelle performers articulate and emphasize: faceting or breaking music into smaller parts, layering tone colors, part-counterpart relationships in musical structures, and time and polyrhythm. She explores fascinating parallels to these analytic themes in the textiles and masks of related arts and in broader cultural practices such as greeting sequences. *Music in West Africa* is enhanced by eyewitness accounts of local performances, interviews with key performers, and vivid illustrations. Packaged with a 70-minute CD containing examples of the music discussed in the book, it features guided listening and hands-on activities that encourage readers to engage actively and critically with the music.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ruth M. Stone is at Indiana University.

This book came with no CD so I am not able to enjoy the reading because I need the CD to listen as part of my reading project. I am very disappointed

Fast shipping, good product. Would buy from again. Thank you!

This is an initial impression, after having read this short paperback in the last few hours. First, the various titles in this series (Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture) seem directed at very different audiences with very different levels of musical sophistication, in spite of the uniformity implied by the grouping as a series. The volumes *Music in South India* (or *Music in North India*), for instance, could be used with music majors in college, while the present volume and its companion volume *Music in East Africa* seem more directed at high school students or perhaps college undergrads with more of an anthropological bent. However, that is just to say that different people will write different books, series or not, and the present text is in fact a finely written and informative book. But it is frustrating to find a volume titled *Music in West Africa* when the text is entirely about the Kpelle in Liberia. It is as if a book titled *Music in North America* actually only treated music in the south side of Chicago. A more general survey, though such might seem quite unfashionable in the very highly specialized world of ethnomusicology, would be most welcome.

Ruth Stone provides a narrowed and scholarly focus in chapters which consider call and response patterns, layered tones in vocal structures, and underlying polyrhythms, using specific quotes and examples from Liberia's Kpelle performers. Intended as a case-study volume for college-level users referencing the Global Music Series master volume *THINKING MUSICALLY*.

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