Saving the Songwood: Global Consumption, Sustainability, & Value

NOV. 23, 2019 * 5-7PM * MUSIC BUILDING 217

A multi-media performance presentation by
TIJAN DORWANA & ALEX SMITH

The gyil, a Ghanaian marimba, is caught at the intersection of sustainability, global market strains, and cultural relevance. People in Ghana’s Northern Region value the gyil’s primary material (the endangered African rosewood) for its musical properties as well as its cultural power, domestic usages, and spiritual significance. Complicating this is that international communities desire the wood for their own music and furniture markets, resulting in deforestation and exploitation. This multi-media performance presentation encourages a compassionate and proactive discussion of rosewood sustainability, one that considers the impacts of global consumption on indigenous communities, natural habitats, and musical instruments.

Collaborating since 2012, Tijan Dorwana (Ghana) and Alex Smith (USA) are performers, teachers, and instrument makers concerned about the future of rosewood in their respective communities.

**Tijan Dorwana** was a member of the Ghana Dance (1979–1985) and the Kalifi Dance (1985–1988) ensembles. He began making gyil in 1988 and soon after became the resident gyil maker for Bernard Woma’s Dagara Music Center. Dorwana has toured throughout Western Europe, the USA, and China.

**Alex Smith** is Assistant Professor of Percussion at the University of Central Missouri. He has published widely in peer-reviewed journals. Smith received a 2019 Fulbright-Hays DDRA Award to continue his work in Ghana.

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Contact Lois Carney (lscarney@uncg.edu or 336-334-5368) for disability accommodations.