

SABAR TERMS

sabar – single-headed drum played with one hand and one stick; played by Wolof griot percussionists of Senegal. “Sabar” refers to the name of the drum, the dance associated with it, and also the drum and dance event at which it is played.

griot - oral historian and/or musician in formerly caste West African societies; the Wolof term for griot is *géwël*.

Wolof – dominant ethnic group in Senegal. Although only 40% of Senegalese consider themselves ethnically Wolof, the Wolof language is spoken and understood by 90% of the Senegalese population.

Specific names of sabar drums (from tallest to shortest):

nder - tallest open-bottom sabar; usually serves as the lead drum in the ensemble.

mbëng-mbëng ball - second-tallest open-bottom sabar

mbëng-mbëng - medium-sized open-bottom sabar

tungune - shortest open-bottom sabar. “*Tungune*” means “midget” in Wolof.

cól - closed-bottom, egg-shaped bass drum; has the lowest sound in the ensemble. Can lead the ensemble, especially at wrestling matches.

rythme - dance rhythm. Usually a fairly short unit that is played repeatedly.

Dance rhythms performed at a sabar (usually in this order):

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Ardin</i> | <i>Baar mbaye</i> |
| <i>Farwu jar</i> | <i>Kaolack (mbalax)</i> |
| <i>Ceebu jën</i> | <i>Lëmbël</i> |

bàkk - musical phrase. In general, longer than a *rythme*. *Bàkks* can be derived from spoken word, or created as purely musical compositions.

mbalax - literally means “accompaniment”; refers to the accompaniment part played on the *mbëng-mbëng*, which is the most important part. Also now used as an umbrella term for the Senegalese popular music genre made famous by Youssou N’Dour. This genre is noted for its strong sabar component, “marimba” keyboard style, and highly syncopated guitar riffs.

talmbat & tulli - two accompaniment parts played on the *cól*.

Texts

| | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Ma demoon ba Gambia | I went to the Gambia |
| Fekke fa auto bu neex | To find a nice car |
| Diko dawal, diko dawal | I drove it, I drove it |
| Diko dawal ba Senegal | I drove it to Senegal |

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Abdou, avec Abdou | Abdou, with Abdou |
| Jusqu’à la mort | Until his death |

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