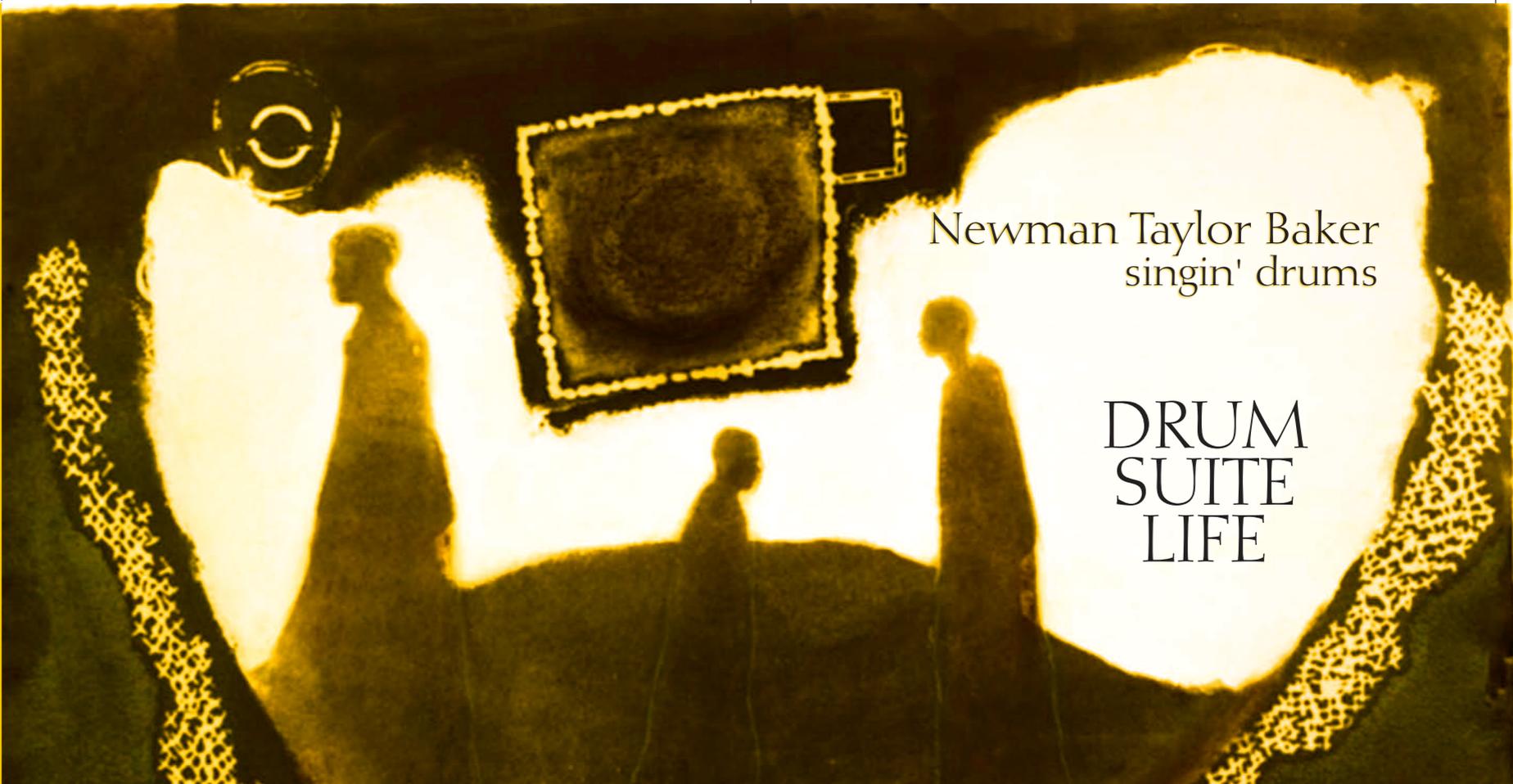


DRUM-SUITE-LIFE IS THE DEBUT CD OF NEWMAN TAYLOR BAKER'S PROJECT, SINGIN' DRUMS; THE RESULT OF A LIFE-LONG DESIRE TO HAVE THE DRUM SET ACCEPTED AS A SOLO INSTRUMENT, AND USING IT TO HONOR THE U. S. AFRICAN CULTURE WHERE THE THE DRUM SET DEVELOPED. FOR BAKER, THE DRUM SET REPRESENTS THE STRENGTH, INTELLIGENCE, CREATIVITY, POWER, ENDURANCE, AND LOVE IN U. S. AFRICAN CULTURE. BAKER CURRENTLY DESIGNS HIS DRUM SET AS A DIATONICALLY TUNED INSTRUMENT OF SEVEN PITCHES. HIS MUSIC IS A HYBRID OF WEST AFRICAN DRUMMING, WESTERN EUROPEAN CLASSICAL MUSIC, AND IMPROVISATION AS A LIFE-STYLE IN U.S. AFRICAN CULTURE. IT USES MELODY, HARMONY, EMOTION, EXPRESSION AS WELL AS RHYTHM, AND REFERS TO SUCH FORMS AS BLUES, GOSPEL, MARCHING BAND, DANCE, SYMPHONIC, AND VOCAL MUSIC. IN ADDITION HE ADAPTS PRE-EXISTING WORKS, AND SEEKS OTHER COMPOSERS TO WRITE FOR SINGIN' DRUMS. PERFORMANCES HAVE INCLUDED COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER MUSICIANS, DJs, DANCER/CHOREOGRAPHERS, VIDEO ARTISTS, AND AS PART OF INTERMEDIA PROJECTS. BAKER WRITES, "THE DRUM SET HAS A STORY TO TELL. WE SEEK TO PRESENT SINGIN' DRUMS IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS FROM FORMAL CONCERTS TO EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS TO SHARE OUR STORY."



Newman Taylor Baker
singin' drums

DRUM
SUITE
LIFE



Drum-Suite-Life for Solo Drum Set by Newman Taylor Baker honors the drum in U. S. African culture through forms such as blues, gospel, marching band, dance, and European symphonic music. *Drum-Suite-Life* follows the U. S. African tradition where music is passed on orally, like the street beats in our marching bands, the spirituals on the plantation, and the rhythms of our dance orchestras.

1. *Red Brush Blues* - reflects on the old-style rural blues tradition for voice and guitar. In this work, the sounds of the drum brushes recall the buzz of the strings on a rural blues guitar. The simple melody establishes the familiar harmonic 12-bar blues form, while the improvisation focuses on the complexity of the vocal phrases.
2. *WB 1* - is written in recognition of the contributions of U. S. African composers such as Undine Smith Moore, T. J. Anderson, Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, William Grant Still, and many, many others.
3. *Thank You, Ms. Jones, Hold On* - blends the concepts of European timpani, West African talking drums, and the U. S. African drum set. The harmonic form is stated through the lower drums in a timpani sound, and the improvisation develops in the higher drums reflecting the vocal qualities of the West African talking drums. This piece is dedicated to Elayne Jones, solo timpanist with the San Francisco Opera — a unique African American role model who suffered the hardships that being the first; being U. S. African; and being a woman playing drums in the European Classical music world bestowed upon the pioneer. This piece is performed with mallets.
4. *Bosom of Abraham* - has the feel of New Orleans and its famous second line, while the melody is inspired by the Negro Spiritual, *Rock-A-My Soul*.
5. *Which Train?* - remembers the Harlem Renaissance and the clubs made famous by the bands of Duke Ellington, Chick Webb, Fletcher Henderson, et al.
6. *Andrew, Milford, & Rashied* - is dedicated to three distinct drum voices in U. S. African avant-garde music: Andrew Cyrille, Milford Graves, and Rashied Ali. Gentlemen whose musical excellence encourages humanity throughout the world.
7. *Marchin' David* - honors the marching bands found in so many southern U. S. African communities. Such marching bands used European military drum rudiments to play remnants of African rhythms, referencing the polyrhythmic character of West African drum ensembles. The result is a music that inspires marching with emotion and feeling — the antithesis of military training.
8. *Handpeace* - honors the hand drum, from Hambone to djembe, and speaks to the power of the drum to unite all humanity through its universal language.

All selections composed and performed by Newman Taylor Baker (without overdubbing or other special effects).

Newman Taylor Baker, Jazz Artist, has performed with Kenny Barron, Billy Bang, Henry Grimes, Billy Harper, Joe Henderson, Abdullah Ibrahim, Ahmad Jamal, Leroy Jenkins, Gloria Lynne, James Moody, Diedre Murray, Dewey Redman, Sam Rivers, Henry Threadgill, McCoy Tyner, and others. At the young age of 67, Baker has found a new music and instrument by joining the Ebony Hillbillies — the only NYC-based black string band — and playing washboard, a magical experience.

Newman Taylor Baker, Classical Percussionist, was a member of the Richmond Symphony (with guest composer Aaron Copland), the Delaware Symphony, and the Wilmington Ballet orchestra.

Newman Taylor Baker, Composer, has written works as composer-in-residence for the Avodah Dance Ensemble since 1989.

Newman Taylor Baker, Teaching Artist, has taught at Rutgers University-Newark, Widener University, Livingstone College, York Correctional Institute, Baylor Correctional Institute, public and private schools, and music conservatories in New York City; Nassau County, NY; Szczecin, Warsaw, Lodz, Poland; and, Osaka, Japan.

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Drum – Suite – Life is dedicated to Virginia State College (1940's-1970's) my home, an extraordinary community of U. S. African women and men who were the first or second U. S. Africans to achieve doctorate degrees in their fields from universities such as Yale, Harvard, Cornell, Ohio State, Michigan, Boston University, and others. With special gratitude to Dr. Undine Smith Moore, Dr. E. Nathaniel Gatlin, and Dr. Thomas C. Bridge from the Department of Music who nurtured me and taught me music from my first interest in music at 9 months old.

THANK YOU TO ALL NEWMAN TAYLOR BAKER

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