

IMPORTANT TERMS IN SABAR DRUMMING

As a spoken language, Wolof is a very old one. *Standardized* written Wolof is relatively new, and still evolving. Words from older resources reflect the influence of the French language; contemporary spellings replace letter combinations such as th- or di- with c- or j-, respectively. This makes searching for, interpreting, and comparing names a very confusing endeavor. The various spellings below come from sources including academic publications, dictionaries, recording liner notes, and also from Senegalese drummers and acquaintances. It is not an exhaustive list!

GENERAL

Bàkk/bak/back: a non-cyclic rhythmic statement of varying length, sometimes based on a *taasu*

dimb: the wood out of which most sabar drums are carved

galen/galeñ: the stick (usually either **sump** or **daqar**) used to play sabar drums; also the rhythm played on the drum's shell to establish tempo and feel

gëwël/géwal/guewëul: the traditional social caste of Wolof oral historians who also specialize in sabar drumming.

Kaolack: the name of a dance rhythm, and also of a region and a town in Senegal

mbalax/mbalakh: the rhythmic and time-keeping pattern central to all sabar music, and played primarily on the mbëng mbëng

ndënd: general Wolof word for all sabar drums

taasu: language spoken rhythmically

Wolof: the primary indigenous language spoken in Senegal

Lebou & Serer: ethnic groups that play sabar

DRUMS

cól/thiol: the lower-pitched of the closed-bottom drums

talmbat/gorong talmbat: the higher-pitched of the closed-bottom drums

gorong yeguel/gorong mbabass: a closed-bottom drum with straps for making the head very tight

nder: the tallest of the open-bottom drums

mbëng mbëng: the middle-sized of the open-bottom drums, and the one which plays mbalax

tungune: the shortest of the open-bottom drums

xin/xiin/khine: the cylindrical, single-headed drum played by the Baay Fall, followers of Cheikh Ibra Fall.

DANCE RHYTHMS (SELECTED)

Kaolack/Ndëc

Lëmbël

Ceebujën/Thieboudien

Ardin

Bara Mbaye

Farwujar

Yaaba

Mbabass/Ñari gorong

TAASU

Ya ñu mom

Ya ñu mom

I am yours

Bu ñu dem dak, bu ñuy dee yëpp

From birth until death

Ya ñu mom

I am yours

Xadim

(My) guardian

Ya ñu mom

I am yours

Loma digal digal

Loma digal digal

All that you advise

Loma digal ma def

All that you tell me I will do

Fi, kër gi, ku fi nekk

Here, this house (and) all the people in it

warngay dégloo

must listen, then learn.

Teydégloo, teydégloo, ndigal

Listen now, take heed of the advice

Jëf, jëf, jëf!

Act, act, act!

Jëfloo baax mo

When you do a good thing,

Diarra def, Niébé gore.

like honest Niébé, it matters.