



Smithsonian/Folkways Records
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SMITHSONIAN/FOLKWAYS SF 45007

ADVENTURES IN RHYTHM

with ELLA JENKINS
and her RHYTHM WORKSHOP



ELLA JENKINS "Adventures In Rhythm"

with Ella Jenkins and her Rhythm Workshop

1. **Caney Mi Macaro** 1:54
2. **Rhythm No. 1 with rhythm sticks** 2:16
3. **I've Been Working on the Railroad** 1:22
4. **Working On the Chain Gang** 2:02
(Ella Jenkins)
5. **Hambone** 1:18
6. **No More Pie** 1:08
(Ella Jenkins)
7. **Long John** 1:54
(arr. Ella Jenkins)
8. **Miss Mary Mack** :59
(arr. Ella Jenkins)
9. **I'm Gonna Sing** 1:17
10. **Rhythm No. 2 with ryhthm sticks** 1:01
11. **Rhythm No. 3 with rhythm sticks** :30
12. **Combining Rhythms No. 1, No. 2, and No. 3 with Zum Gali Gali** 1:23
13. **Rhythm No. 2 with drum** 1:02
14. **Rhythm No. 3 with drum** :40
15. **Rhythm No. 4 with drum** :52
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17. **Rhythm No. 6 with drum** :28
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21. **Rhythm No. 10 with drum** :21
22. **Rhythm No. 11 with drum** :21
23. **Bulawaya** 1:08
(Ella Jenkins)

Originally released in 1959 as Folkways FC 7682.
Digitally remastered by Randy Kling at Disc Mastering, Nashville, Tennessee.
Front cover photograph by Jo Banks.

Also by Ella Jenkins on Smithsonian/Folkways:
SF 45002 *This-a-way, That-a-way* (was 7546)
SF 45003 *African-American Folk and Work Song Rhythms* (was 7654)
SF 45004 *Rhythms and Chants* (was 7000)
SF 45005 *My Street Begins at My House* (was 7543)
SF 45006 *We Are All America's Children* (was 7666)
SF 45008 *Rhythms of Childhood* (was 7653)
SF 45009 *Traveling with Ella Jenkins* (was 7640)
SF 45010 *You'll Sing A Song and I'll Sing A Song* (was 7664)

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ADVENTURES IN RHYTHM

with Ella Jenkins and her Rhythm Workshop



Ella Jenkins
(excerpt from Jan., 1959 *Chicago Daily Tribune* article by Roi Ottley)

Ella Jenkins, a Rhythm Specialist, folk singer, and interpreter of primitive music, has won a reputation for her performance-lectures on primitive instruments and music but has never been beyond the borders of the United States.

Miss Jenkins, who appears weekly on WTTW (channel 11—educational television), presents primitive songs, chants, and Negro folk rhythms, and plays a variety of instruments.

Her profession originated with a hobby when she was a Sociology major at San Francisco State College. Soon she began collecting drums and other primitive instruments, learning rhythm patterns and making some of her own.

Miss Jenkins owns and plays more than fifty instruments, which include drums from Kenya, Liberia, Cuba, China, Turkey, Mexico and America (American Indian tom tom), bells from India, Indonesia and Mexico, rhumba box and Royal Poinciana tree pod from Jamaica and various kinds of rhythm sticks and rattles.

The songs, chants, and rhythms she uses are interpretations and variations of Hebrew, Arabic, Spanish, French, African, and American Negro material she happens across. She believes that this music provides her audiences with greater understanding of other people's cultures.

Miss Jenkins has had no formal training in music, but has learned the primitive music of many countries by research and study and recording songs, chants and rhythms of people from abroad—mostly students and entertainers—who visited Chicago.

Rhythm Workshop

The Rhythm Workshop is designed to improve one's "sense of rhythm," and to help create an awareness of the many rhythmic patterns in day to day living. The workshop also provides an opportunity for creative expression and aids each individual to embrace some of the rich recreational and educational values gained through producing musical harmony with others.

Throughout the year Ella conducts Rhythm Workshops for schools, churches, conventions, conferences, recreational centers and camps. With the use of primitive gongs, rattles, primitive drums, hand-clapping, rhythms sticks and other interesting rhythm instruments, the workshop participant learns folk songs and chants of many countries and explores simple and complex rhythms.

Apart from the workshop Ella does single performances to fit the theme of a particular morning, afternoon or evening program. Her songs, chants and rhythms emphasize audience participation and international unity.

What is Rhythm?

There is no really set answer to this question inasmuch as rhythm includes many different ingredients, however, I will venture to say that one essential ingredient is movement, for life itself is based upon it—without it there would be no rhythm.

When conducting a ten-week Rhythm Workshop at George Williams College in Chicago, I asked at the second meeting what each workshop participant thought or felt rhythm was. Here are some of their interesting responses:

1. "Rhythm is the basic movement of life found in anything that moves. It comes in fascinating patterns from simple to very intricate—all of which have already been used in nature of all forms." *Julie Carlson*

2. "A set pattern of beats following in succession—with a steady tempo." *Norm Moss*

3. "Rhythm ... flowing patterns establishing sporadic tones, variety, intermittent beats, forming a musical story or unified whole ..." *Phillip Brown*

4. "Rhythm is a term that describes the beat of music or the consistent sound of a noise." *Johnny B. Sharp*

5. "It is ever-present in life—life has its rhythms." *Hugh O'Neil*

6. "Variations in movement which, when repeated with a certain repetition and combustion, cause persons to respond (get with it!)." *Don Clayton*

7. "Any beat or artistic creation that seems to form a pattern in color or sound (loud & soft)." *Tom Scott*

8. "A regular beat that has control whether fast or slow." *Merrill Oleson*

9. "Rhythm is a feeling you get when you feel rhythmical and want to express it through moving in certain patterns." *Jerry*

10. "Rhythm is the feeling which is carried out in a systematic scheme or pattern." ?

11. "Rhythm is life plus energy plus beauty." *Faye La Rue*

Where Do You Look For Rhythms?

Look for rhythms in everything—in walking, talking, chewing gum, type-writing, in dancing—in all forms of art—in nature. As you look around your environment you will become keenly aware of the fact that rhythm is, as mentioned in some of the examples above, movement from which patterns are set forth and repeated, such as on the stripes of a zebra, the designs on clothes, the flap of a bird's wings in flight. Look for rhythm and you will find it in all aspects of life.

Perhaps man's first consciousness of rhythm came with his listening to and feeling the vibrations—the beat of his own heart. From there, it seems likely that he may have transferred the rhythms of his heartbeat to the drum, using a hollowed out log for the drum base and animal skin for the drum head—he used shaking objects also. The cave man broadened his outlook considerably when he became aware

that he could communicate with the beat of anything which would carry sound, using his voice and body as an instrument.

Adventures in Rhythm Begin Early In Life

A. Rhythm Sticks as Basic Rhythm Instruments

Rhythm sticks have long been associated and identified with small children in the primary grades; their special function being to serve as basic rhythm instruments, to help children become aware of rhythm and to help them also develop a sense of rhythm, by striking the sticks against one another or tapping them on the floor, producing rhythms and sounds.

Perhaps one of the greatest uses of rhythm sticks in the primary grades today—from my many observances of children in classrooms throughout the country—are their usage in keeping time and creating rhythms of their own, in the ever familiar and popular rhythm band, where a variety of instruments (mostly percussion) are blended.

In this album we shall also let the rhythm sticks serve as our basic instrument, beginning with simple rhythms, then going to complex ones and finally transferring these rhythms to the "primitive" drum (played with hands rather than with drum sticks).

B. There is Rhythm in You!

Although the first two paragraphs above relate to small children and rhythm sticks, this record is not directed toward the small child, but rather toward older children, teens and the so-called inhibited adult.

It is especially directed toward those persons who feel they have no rhythm in them (there is rhythm in you—we need only help you bring it to the surface), and those trying to improve their sense of rhythm.

C. Teaching and Enjoying Rhythms

The record is designed also for persons working with young people, to make use of it as a program resource. After you have thoroughly absorbed the material we've presented here, then it's your time to teach. Use your own method, approach, personality, etc., in introducing it—you'll find there will be a lot of interest to all age groups.

At the outset you'll want to use the record alone; work by yourself; however, the ultimate enjoyment is experienced when sharing these rhythms, songs, chants and sounds with a group (small or large).

D. No Formal Teaching Methods Used

Before we start on our rhythmic adventure, I would like for you to put aside, for awhile, all formal methods of learn-

ing music. We will emphasize clapping, tapping, snapping, etc., on the beat rather than off the beat, as this is easiest for most people ... My system is aimed at helping you feel and enjoy (not analyze and calculate) the rhythm within you. Now relax and have fun!

E. Using Rhythm Sticks

Illustrations No. 1 and 2 suggest a way of holding the rhythm sticks, however you may prefer another way—the important thing is to get a good and comfortable grip on the sticks in order that they may be manipulated with ease. You will notice that in the illustrations the left hand is cupped and serves as a resonator. The right hand stick is struck against the left-hand stick (reverse the position if you're left-handed).

For the best tone strike the stick in the center except when instructed otherwise or when you have arrived at that point where you feel you are ready to experiment with varying tonal effects.

Before we begin, let us listen to an informal Rhythm Workshop session. This small group has worked out some interesting combinations of rhythms and sounds to a Nigerian Chant (slightly modified), using various kinds of instruments: rhythm sticks, pod from Royal Poinciana tree, bamboo drum, conga drum and the clave tone block.

Caney Mi Macaro

(This is a non-sense—much like calypso; meaning, unknown)

Rhythm No. 1

a.

and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8

All right, join in, counting along with me.

and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8

Repeat the exercise, this time counting to yourself, but keep the rhythm.

b.

and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8

Let's speed up the rhythm like this:

c.

and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8

Ready? Begin.

and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8

This time, a bit softer, using the same tempo.

d.

and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8
and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 5 and 6 and 7 and 8

Let's go back to the tempo we started with keeping it going, counting to yourself, anticipating and feeling the rhythm—then observe how easily a song may be combined with it. Sing along with us if the spirit hits you.

I've Been Working On the Railroad

I've been working on the railroad
All the live long day
I've been working on the railroad
Just to pass the time away
Can't you hear the whistle blowing
Rise up so early in the morn
Can't you hear the captain shouting
Dinah blow your horn
Dinah won't you blow
Dinah won't you blow
Dinah won't you blow your horn

Dinah won't you blow
Dinah won't you blow
Dinah won't you blow your horn
Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah
Someone's in the kitchen I know
Someone's in the kitchen with Dinah
Strumming on the old banjo
Fee fi filio
Fee fi filio-o-o
Fee fi filio
Strumming on the old banjo

Let's use this rhythm with a chain gang chant. Two wrenches are being struck together to produce the effect of a hammer striking against a large rock.

Working On the Chain Gang (written by Ella Jenkins)

I'm working on the chain gang
Working all day long (group response)
I'm working on the chain gang
And I sing this song (group response)

II

Working on the chain gang
No relief in sight (group response)
Working on the chain gang
'Til it's almost night (group response)

III

One of these days, boys
And it won't be long (group response)
I'm gonna leave this old chain gang
I'll be a long time gone (group response)

We'll use a faster rhythm on this children's chant.

Hambone

Hambone, hambone, where you been?
(group response)
Round the world and I'm going again
Hambone, hambone, where's your wife?
In the kitchen cooking rice
Hambone, hambone, have you heard?
Papa's gonna buy you a mocking bird
If that mocking bird don't sing
Papa's gonna buy you a diamond ring
If that diamond ring don't shine
Papa's gonna buy you a street car line
If that street car line get broke
Papa's gonna buy you a billy goat
If that billy goat run away
Papa's gonna buy you a stack of hay
If that stack of hay burn down
Papa's gonna buy you a wedding gown
If that wedding gown gets tore
Papa's gonna kick you out the door
(whisper)
Hambone!

For the non-sense chant to follow use the moderate tempo:

No More Pie (written by Ella Jenkins)

O my! (group response)
I wanna piece of pie
Well, the pie's too sweet
I wanna piece of meat
The meat's too red
I wanna piece of bread
The bread's too brown
I gotta go to town
The town's too far
I must catch a car
The car's too slow
I fell and stubbed my toe
The toe's got a pain
I must catch a train
The train had a wreck
I nearly broke my neck
O my!
No more pie
O my!
No more pie

Here's another chain gang chant you can practice with, using the moderate tempo and snapping your fingers:

Long John

(arranged by Ella Jenkins)
One day, one day (group response)
I was walking along
Well I met up with a man
And he taught me this song
About Long John
He's a long gone
Like a turkey through the corn
With his long clothes on
Now John had
A pair of shoes
The funniest little shoes
I ever did see
They had a heel in front
And a heel behind
And you never knew which
Way he's a going
He's Long John
He's long gone
Like a turkey through the corn
With his long clothes on
If he had a listened
To what his mama said
He'd be sleeping
In his mama's bed
But he didn't listen
Just wandered about
Now he's on the chain gang
With his mouth poked out
He's long gone
What I mean
He's long gone
From Bowling Green
Gone, gone
Gone John
Bye, bye, John
So long

Speed up your rhythm again, this time clapping your hands:

Miss Mary Mack* (arranged by Ella Jenkins)

Miss Mary Mack (leader)
Mack, Mack (group)
All dressed in black
Black, black
With silver buttons
Buttons, buttons
All down her back
Back, back
She asked her mother
Mother, mother
For fifteen cents
Cents, cents
To see the elephants
Elephants, elephants
Jump the fence
Fence, fence
They jumped so high
High, high
They touched the sky
Shy, shy
That they never came down
Down, down
'Til the fourth of July
Ly, ly

*The burst of laughter at the end of Miss Mary Mack was due to our "having a ball" trying to coordinate our rhythm with the song; instead of one person clapping his own hands together, partners slapped opposite palms

together, causing much difficulty. We thought we'd never get it right. We decided we might as well leave the laughter in.

I'm Gonna Sing

I'm gonna sing when the spirit says
sing
I'm gonna sing when the spirit says
sing
I'm gonna sing when the spirit says
sing
And obey the word of the Lord

(2) Shout when the spirit says shout,
etc.

(3) Preach

(4) Pray (softly)

(5) Sing (loudly)

Rhythm No. 2

a.

1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold

Begin:

1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold
1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold

Speed up the rhythm:

b.

1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold
1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold

The moderate tempo once more, counting to yourself:

c.

1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold
1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold

Rhythm No. 3

a.

12345 12345 12345 12345 12345
12345 12345 12345

The first four beats are even—the last beat is to be accented ... Strike the first four beats in the center of the rhythm stick; the fifth beat, at the tip. Let's begin—a bit faster:

b.

12345 12345 12345 12345 12345
12345 12345 12345

When going over each of the exercises, practice the rhythms at fast, moderate and slow tempos, to learn control—also count to yourself until you can automatically feel the rhythm, and from time to time, start your rhythm softly and gradually become louder—then reverse the pattern.

Combining Rhythms 1, 2 and 3

In order to achieve the maximum enjoyment from your rhythmic adventure, as I stated earlier, it is important to work along with several other people—however, if there are at least three you can have fun combining these three rhythms.

First: one person begins Rhythm No. 1:

and 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

Second: As the first person starts the fifth count, the second person begins with Rhythm No. 2:

1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold 1234 hold

Third: As the second person starts the fifth count the third person begins Rhythm No. 3:

12345 12345 12345 12345

You could easily accompany a group singing a Palestinian song like this one (whoever plays the first rhythm can always join in on the singing as it is the easier rhythm to coordinate with the voice):

Zum Gali Gali

Zum gali gali gali, zum gali gali
Zum gali gali gali, zum gali gali

He-cha-lutz le 'man a-vo-dah
A-vo-dah le 'man he-cha-lutz
He-cha-lutz le 'man a-vo-dah
A-vo-dah le 'man he-cha-lutz

Ha-sha-lom le 'man ha' a-mim
Ha'a-mim le 'man ha-sha-lom
Ha-sha-lom le 'man ha' a-mim
Ha'a-mim le 'man ha-sha-lom

Zoom zoom zoom!!!

F. Transferring Rhythms to the "Primitive" Drum

Rhythm No. 2 with drum

Place your hands over the drum head as illustrated by the male drummer in illustration No. 3. Begin with the right hand like this:

(1)

RLRL hold RLRL hold RLRL hold RLRL hold
RLRL hold RLRL hold RLRL hold RLRL hold

Try it a bit faster—like this:

(2)
RLRL hold RLRL hold RLRL hold RLRL hold
RLRL hold RLRL hold RLRL hold RLRL hold
Now, start with your left hand:

(3)
LRLR hold LRLR hold LRLR hold LRLR hold
LRLR hold LRLR hold LRLR hold LRLR hold
Try snapping your fingers on the hold—start with the right hand:

(4)
RLRL snap RLRL snap RLRL snap RLRL snap
RLRL snap RLRL snap RLRL snap RLRL snap
Think of some other variations

Rhythm No. 3 with drum

Start with the right hand, accenting the last beat:

(1)
RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR
RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR

Now, try this rhythm at a faster tempo:

(2)
RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR
RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR

Try it a bit softer, at the same tempo:

(3)
RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR
RLRLR RLRLR RLRLR

Rhythm No. 4 with drum

Begin with right hand at this tempo:

(1)
RLRLR RLRL hold RLRLR RLRL hold
RLRLR RLRL hold
RLRLR RLRL hold RLRLR RLRL hold
RLRLR RLRL hold

Speed up the tempo:

(2)
RLRLR RLRL hold RLRLR RLRL hold
RLRLR RLRL hold
RLRLR RLRL hold RLRLR RLRL hold
RLRLR RLRL hold

Keep the same tempo, but softer:

(3)

RLRLR RLRL hold RLRLR RLRL hold
RLRLR RLRL hold
RLRLR RLRL hold RLRLR RLRL hold
RLRLR RLRL hold
Other Rhythms to Experiment with the Drum

Rhythm No. 5
With this rhythm a roll can be achieved on the drum, by gradually speeding up the rhythm:

(1)
RL RL RL RL RL RL RL RL RL

or

(2)
LR LR LR LR LR LR LR LR LR

Rhythm No. 6

(1)
RLR hold RLR hold RLR hold RLR hold
RLR hold RLR hold RLR hold RLR hold

(2)
RLR hold LRL hold RLR hold LRL hold
123 hold 123 hold 123 hold 123 hold

Alternating hands strengthens the dexterity of both hands.

Rhythm No. 7

(1)
RLRLR and hold RLRLR and hold
RLRLR and hold

or

(2)
12345 and hold 12345 and hold 12345 and hold

or

(3)
and hold, shave and hair cut and hold

Rhythm No. 8

(1)
Shave and a hair cut six bits

(2)
RLRLR LR RLRLR LR RLRLR LR RLRLR LR

(3)
12345 123 12345 123 12345 123
12345 123

(4)
Shave and a hair cut cha cha cha

Rhythm No. 10

(1)
"Dad's Old Fashioned Root Beer"
(2)
RLRLRL RLRLRL RLRLRL RLRLRL
(3)
123456 123456 123456 123456

Rhythm No. 11 (good for "primitive" dancing)

(1)
RRRLRL RRLRL RRLRL RRLRL
RRRLRL RRLRL RRLRL RRLRL

(2)
12345 12345 12345 12345
12345 12345 12345 12345

The next step is, to create rhythms of your own.

This is the end of our Rhythmic Adventure—we hope it's only the beginning for you.

Bulawayo

(written by Ella Jenkins)

is a chant in sounds—the title, borrowed from the Netherlands West Indies, means "Jump the Fence." It was written as a tribute to Ghana's Independence (sung and played by Ella and her Rhythm Workshop, using the 11th rhythm.

You might find it a lot of fun making a few of the instruments you'll use for your Rhythm Workshop.

Credits:

Rhythm Workshop participants:
Valucha Buffington, Jean Curtis, Ted Johnson, Louis McDonald.

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