



Dr. Olu Taiwo: Embodying the Return Beat



Olu Taiwo teaches acting, physical theatre, immersive and digital performances at the University of Winchester and holds a background in fine arts, street dance, African percussion, Tidy Tron, and animal spirit movement. Discover the basics and deep framework that differentiates rhythms from various cultures and gain an understanding of the West African “*The Return Beat*”.

**TOP EMBODIMENT TIP:** Listen with the whole body: with your feelings, soul, instincts with resonance.

Introduction Drumming:

- Bring in the **drum to play as a gift to the listeners**, the ancestors, the unborn - a West African tradition.

Laban - his ideas as a framework for understanding explained:

- Inspired by explorations of movement and studies of Laban: **the relationship between the body and space** from a performer’s perspective. Laban’s Ideas come from ancient Hellenic ideas.
- **Choreutics** is spatial harmony and **Eukinetics** (the body's inner necessity and ability to create movement).
- **Effort** is directly linked to consciousness and the idea of effort requires **flow**.
- Movement inspired by Flow and weight - heavy to light - Quick or sustained movement.
- **Space** - Where the body moves and in a harmonious relationship with space.
- **Direct (focused)/flexible movement (open)** - Increasing our sensitivity to fundamental movement.
- **Breath rhythm** - Changing your breath in alignment with movement.

The African rhythm:

- Explaining **different paradigms of seeing space-time. Different cultures have different ideas of space-time.**
- Introducing African space-time.
- Breath rhythm, action rhythm, metric rhythm (end target).
- The return beat is the internal core.
- Understanding movement through the different spaces around the body (the kinesphere).

The return beat paradigm:

- **In West African time, you have a 0** (western starts on 1) - Time unfolds and expands, like drops in water.
- The tendency in a metric rhythm is to go faster because you want to reach somewhere (gets us into the mind).
- With the return beat you come back to the body - Creating “flowers in the moment” vs. flows in “time”.
- The tempo is aligned with nature's rhythms.

Resources:

❖ **Website:**

<https://www.winchester.ac.uk/about-us/leadership-and-governance/staff-directory/staff-profiles/taiwo.php>



## Dr Olu Taiwo





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