

The Amadinda I make is derived from the Ugandan Amadinda, one of the chief musical instruments of the Baganda tribe of southern Uganda. The twelve note Amadinda ("Ama" - big, "dinda" - keys) evolved from an even larger xylophone, the twenty-two keyed Akadinda; and has eventually become more common. The Ugandan instrument consists of 12 hewn logs laid out on fresh banana stems. I arrived at my design out of a wish to be able to stand and play (not to mention the lack of fresh banana stems in Maine), allowing greater mobility. I also adapted it to a western tuning to enhance "playability" for North Americans.

The Baganda have a set method of playing the Amadinda - one person plays a rhythm, always striking with both sticks an octave apart from each other. Another person sits opposite the first and plays octaves, but a syncopated rhythm. A third person plays only the top two notes, only striking them whenever either of the other two musicians hits a corresponding note an octave or two down.

One definitely need not play "Ugandan" to get some beautiful music out of their Amadinda. The tuning is [pentatonic](#) (a five note scale) consisting of the notes F,G,A,C,D... The wonderful thing about this tuning is that all the notes are sympathetic with one-another. Therefore anyone or any number of people can play any combinations of rhythms or notes, and it all sounds great - there are no "sour" notes. This, along with the physical involvement with the Amadinda, make it ideal for: children, anyone lacking musical confidence, improvisers, music therapy practitioners, percussionists of all abilities, and anyone who loves to jam. My Amadindas are played by people of musical backgrounds ranging from three year-olds to world class percussionists. They are well used in music therapy and immensely popular in children's museums.

Amadindas are happy indoors or out and "break down" easily for transporting.



Ugandans playing what appears to be an Akadinda.

For more info see the Wikipedia page:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baganda_music

