

## **KOTOKO BRASS — Biography**

### **Kotoko Brass Bio**

Inspired by the traditional drum rhythms of Ghana, Kotoko Brass has created a unique, joyful, and improvisational style of West African dance music described by the Boston Globe as “propulsive, infectious party music”. The drums provide the heart and soul of Kotoko Brass — merging syncopated African percussion polyrhythms with hard-hitting dance grooves on the drumset. The horns blend traditional sounds of New Orleans with the famous West African brass band sound heard from Ghana to Nigeria, and the guitar, keys, and bass evoke classic African and Caribbean styles of highlife, afrobeat, and reggae. A celebratory and energetic synthesis of music, people, and cultures from around the world, Kotoko Brass features musicians from Ghana, Antigua, Japan, and the United States playing together in unity. Kotoko Brass has shared the stage with Angelique Kidjo, Red Baraat, Femi Kuti, the California Honeydrops, Vieux Farka Toure, Innov Gnawa, Take 6, the Boston Pops, Rubblebucket, and more.

### **Individual Artist Bios**

Attah Poku (percussion) was born and raised in Ghana inside the walls of the Asante King’s palace, and grew up to be a lead drummer in the king’s drum ensemble. Michael Ofori (percussion) is a multifaceted performing artist from Ghana — his creative interests lie in African performing arts traditions including drumming, acting, and directing. Ben Paulding (drumset) is an American percussionist who extensively lived and trained in Kumasi, Ghana, and now directs the Fafali Ghanaian drum and dance ensemble at Brandeis University. Brian Paulding (trombone) has traveled the world playing pop, soul, reggae, and calypso music in Turkey, Tunisia, Georgia, Germany, Trinidad, Canada, and across the United States. Dillon Zahner (guitar) specializes in African guitar styles from across the continent, playing music from Mozambique, Senegal, and Mali in bands such as Kina Zore, M’Bolo, and Samba Lolo. Yusaku Yoshimura (keys) is an internationally touring pianist who has performed and recorded with Earl Chinna Smith and shared stages with Patti LaBelle, Ledisi, and Lalah Hathaway. M’Talewa Thomas (bass) came to the U.S. in the 90s from his home country of Antigua after touring the Caribbean for many years with leading calypso act Short Shirt. Andy Bergman (sax) is a versatile and eclectic global musician who has toured the world performing with bands such as Iyeoka Okoawo, Guy Mendilow, and the Macrotones.