

Awa Awa Atu: A Cultural Ghanaian Hello and Goodbye Chant

By Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist Kofi Dennis

Amongst the Akan people of Ghana, “atu” means “hug,” and someone might say “awa atu” before hugging another person. As a transitional song or chant, this experience uses the phrase as either “I’m ready to greet you with a hug” or “I’m ready to say goodbye with a hug.” When singing, instructors should use their head voices to match the higher pitch of the vocal cords for young children.

Lyrics and Motions:

Awa, Awa, Awa-a-a-a	(Spread your arms for this part)
Atu, Atu, Atu-u-u-u!	(Hug yourself for this part)
Awa-a-a-a	(Open your arms wide)
Atu-u-u-u-u!	(Give yourself a big hug)