

Kansas City Young Audiences

Teacher Program Guide

African Caravan

Artist: Traditional Music Society

Performance Description

Inside this guide:

Performance Description
Educational
Artist Bio
Vocabulary
List of Resources
Post-Performance Activities

Contact KCYA for more information on this and other programs.

816-531-4022
www.kcya.org

The Traditional Music Society begins this performance with an introduction to the geography of Western Africa. The ensemble then shares the music and dance of Mali, one of Africa's greatest empires.

A center of world trade from 1200 AD to 1500 AD, Mali was part of a trade route which included cities such as Cairo, Tunis, and Timbuktu.

Percussionist Bird Fleming is joined by veteran teaching-artists Jaisson Taylor, Elisha Israel, and dancers Vanessa Gibbs and Keisha Davis for this performance.



The Traditional Music Society drummers march in a processional formation, recreating a caravan playing a selection to signal the arrival of guests to a West African village. Using a map, students will trace the routes traveled by visitors who came to Africa to exchange goods.

Students will also see dances that depict important social aspects of African village life, such as harvest time, a baby naming ceremony, and giving praise. The performance concludes with students participating in learning African dance steps.

Educational Objectives and Standards

Students will:

- Recognize the significance of music and dance in African life.
- Be introduced to the importance of mutual exchange among cultures, whether economic, social or musical.

Behavioral:

- Knows how a culture's art works and artifacts reflect its values and beliefs.
- Dance:
- Understands dance in various cultures and historical periods.

Special Points of Interest:

Legendary Timbuktu is located in Mali as well as the dramatic Bandiagara escarpment, home to the fascinating culture of the Dogon.

Special REQUIREMENTS:

Wood floor or stage (35' x 35' preferred); dressing area; PA system with five microphones on boom stands; large world map (or map of Africa); area should be clean and clear of students 30 minutes before performance. Note: If a wood floor is not available, program content is adjusted for lower impact dance styles.

Artist Bio: The Traditional Music Society

Bird Fleming developed his interest in music and drumming in his fifth grade band class. Since his parents could not afford a drum set, he played the bongos. By the age of 20, Bird was proficient in a variety of African and Afro-Cuban instruments. His career then led to him San Francisco where he performed and studied traditional hand drumming.

After moving to Kansas City in 1981, Bird began per-

forming traditional music in schools, community centers, and universities throughout the metropolitan area. He formed The Traditional Music Society, an arts organization devoted to multi-cultural arts education. This organization, composed of musicians and dancers sharing a similar background in folk music, has developed programs that teach students about different cultures through music and dance.



Bird Fleming

Vocabulary

Call and response: African musical concept in which a singer or musician answers a call from another singer or musician.

Djembe (pronounced ‘jim bey’): A goblet or vase-shaped, single-headed hand drum played with the whole hand.

Jambo: Swahili greeting meaning hello.

Jeli (a.k.a. griot:) The name for

the African historian who is the record-keeper, counselor, mediator, master dancer and second in power to a king or queen.

Jun-jun: West African bass drum played with two sticks.

Oral tradition: A method of passing down history and tradition through songs and stories rather than the written word.

Post-Performance Activities

1. Discuss the music and dance you saw today. What role did music and dance play in West African society? What is the role of music and dance today in our country? How is the program you saw similar to the music and dance you have seen in this country? How is it different?
2. Africans used music to celebrate harvests, the arrival of guests, and everyday life from lullabies to songs to accompany chores. Examine the role of music in your own life. Do you use special songs or music on special occasions? What music do you find stimulating, motivating, and soothing?
3. How else do you use music, and what are its effects on your everyday life?



List of Resources

BOOKS

[The Healing Drum: African Wisdom Teachings](#) by Yaya Diallo, Mitch Hall
Destiny Books; (January 1, 1990)
ISBN: 0892812567

[The Drummer's Path: Moving the Spirit With Ritual and Traditional Drumming](#)
by Sule Greg Wilson
Destiny Books; (August 1, 1992)
ISBN: 0892813598

[The Healing Power of the Drum](#)
by Robert Lawrence Friedman
White Cliffs Media; (September 2000)
ISBN: 0941677877

[Ritual: Power, Healing, and Community](#)
by Malidoma Patrice Some
Penguin Books; (December 1, 1997)
ISBN: 0140195580