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Thank you for downloading the Study Guide to go along with the performance presented by Arts On Stage. The last page of this Study Guide is a **Letter to Families** for you to send home with the child that includes information on what they saw to encourage parents to ask their child about the field trip.

Please direct any questions or correspondence (letters to performers from staff and/or students) to Arts On Stage. Make sure you note what performance and we will make sure they get into the right hands.

Contact Information:

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Presenting Live Professional Theatre Field Trips for Students & Families

Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble

THE COMPANY

The Universal African Dance & Drum Ensemble (UAD) was founded by Mr. Robert & Mrs. Wanda Dickerson in 1984. They are the directors of the ensemble, along with the dedicated assistance of their oldest son, Jamal, and his lovely wife, Ronsha. This program consists of African Dance, Drum, Masquerade, Creative, Aerobic, Modern, Line Dance and Praise Dance. The ensemble has been greatly blessed with the famous "Pasha" the Stilt walker / Dancer, who has been a member since 1984. The ensemble is based in Camden, New Jersey and is comprised of members from Camden, New Jersey and Philadelphia.

Since its inception, the ensemble has grown to be one of the largest professional African Dance & Drum Ensembles in the United States of America. The UAD has also been blessed and sanctioned as the best African-American Dance & Drum Troupe in America by scholars, historians and African Djelis (historians). The ensemble strives to be sensational and electrifying with their amazing Stilt Walkers, Dancers, Drummers, Ground Masquerades and exciting acrobatic show. The UAD is a very versatile and flexible troupe who are able to conform their troupe from 44 to 2 performers. They are known for their West African presentations of Guinea, Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Gambia, Liberia and more. They professionally perform song, dance and drum from many sections & cultures of Africa, such as West, East, South, Central and North Africa. They have performed at many prominent and prestigious events in this country, including performing for and honoring leaders of countries, celebrities, politicians, religious, business and community leaders. They have also been blessed to study extensive traditional and authentic dance, drum, song, language and instruments with Moussa and Tenenfig Dioubate, two of the greatest African Dance & Drum teachers, djelis, and scholars from the best African Dance & Drum Troupes in the world.

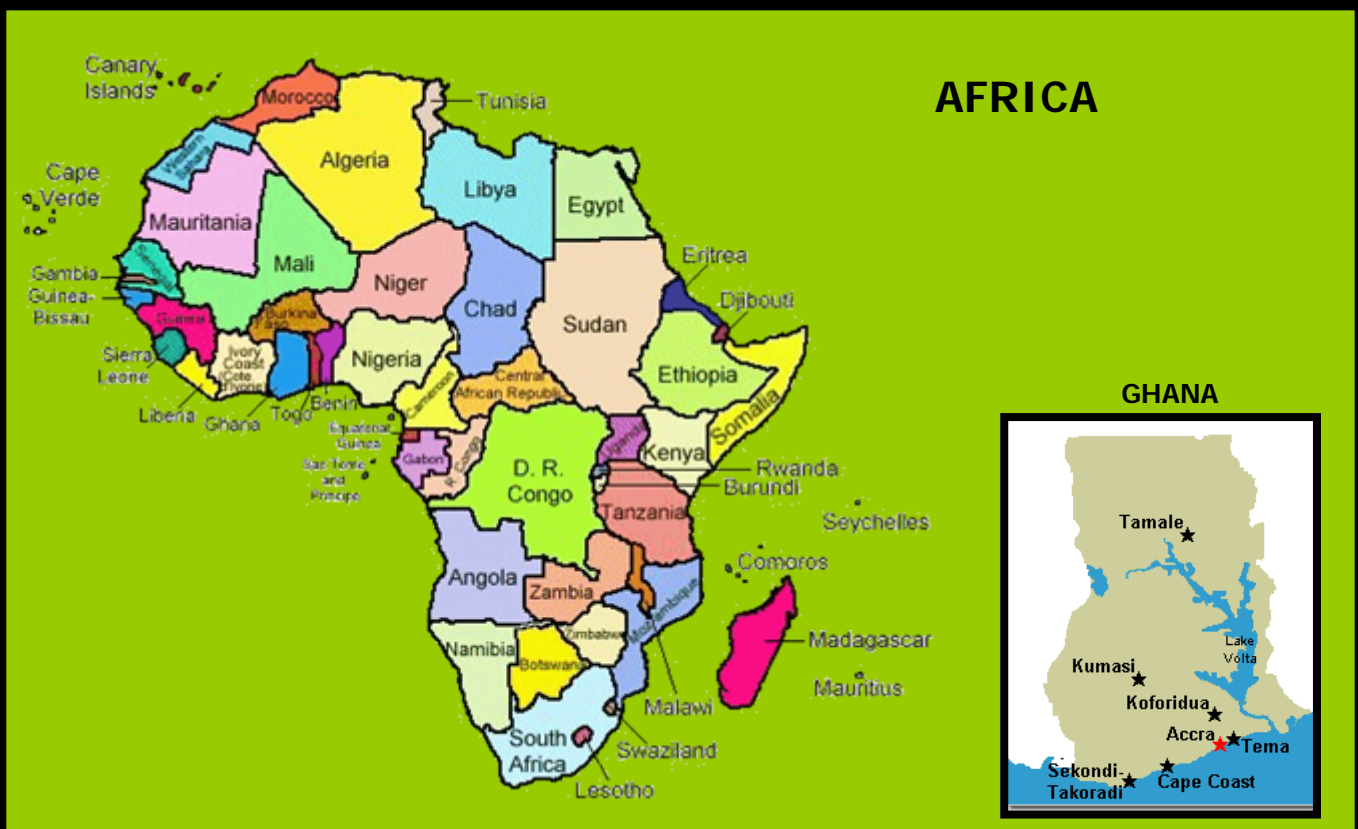
Les Ballet Africains is another group from West Africa (Guinea), that has served as mentors and role-models for the UAD. The UAD modeled themselves after Les Ballet Africains, and have personally received drums, instruments, costumes and teachings from members of Les Ballet Africains while they toured America and while some of the UAD's members were in Conakry, Guinea, Africa. While together, members of Les Ballet Africain have treated the UAD as family and boast about how they enjoyed playing their CD (called Dimedi Faabe) in Africa.

The Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble are very honored to represent the beauty of African Culture in America. The UAD choreographs and presents powerful, and electrifying performances for everyone and especially encourages African-Americans in America to appreciate their culture. One of the UAD's goals is to help African Americans to understand the importance of honoring their place of origin (Africa, the Motherland,) while at the same time helping to build unity between the two by emphasizing history, education, and the performing arts.

The UAD is made up of various inner-city African-American families of contrasting religions and different ways of life. This proves through the understanding of love and discipline, while practicing, working and training together, that unity can exist in the inner cities of America and other communities. "The pulse of the drum is the spirit of the heart."



ABOUT WEST AFRICA



DID YOU KNOW...

On March 6, 1957, Ghana became the first sub-Saharan country in colonial Africa to gain its independence

GHANA AT A GLANCE

AREA: 239,460 sq km

POPULATION: 22,409,572

CAPITAL: Accra

LANGUAGE: English (official), African languages (including Akan, Moshi-Dagomba, Ewe, and Ga)

PRESIDENT: John Agyekum Kufuor

HIGHEST ELEVATION: Mount Afadjato 880 m

MONETARY UNIT: cedi

CLIMATE: tropical; warm and comparatively dry along southeast coast; hot and humid in southwest; hot and dry in north

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS: cocoa, rice, coffee, cassava (tapioca), peanuts, corn, shea nuts, bananas; timber

NATURAL RESOURCES: gold, timber, industrial diamonds, bauxite, manganese, fish, rubber, hydropower, petroleum, silver, salt, limestone

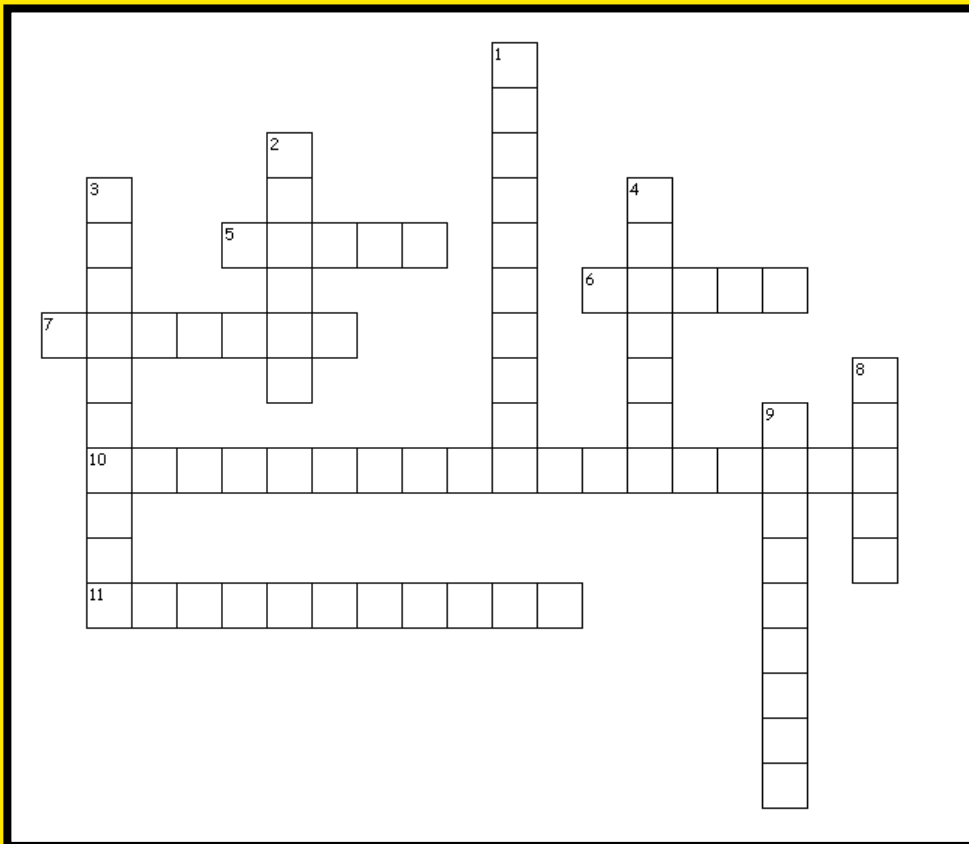
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



DID YOU KNOW...

That Masquerades in traditional African societies represent the beauty and the spirit of its ancestors? The masquerade on stilts, known as “Chakaba” in Western African societies and the Mocko Jumbi in other African/Caribbean societies, is actually the spiritual police of the village or community. The Chakaba brings blessings to the festivities, and is also used by parents and elders to teach values of discipline and mutual respect. It is also believed that the Chakaba heals women’s hearts and helps women while giving birth.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Across

5. "The pulse of the drum is the spirit of the ____"
6. UAD hopes to build this between Africa and African Americans
7. masquerade on stilts
10. group UAD modeled themselves after
11. name of UAD's CD

Down

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. largest African drum with a powerful bass sound | 2. lead African drum |
| 3. name UAD uses for Africa | 4. mid sized African drum |
| 8. name of UAD's stiltwalker | 9. Mr. and Mrs. _____ are the founders of UAD |

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

BOOKS: Mendonsa, Eugene L. West Africa: An Introduction to Its History, Civilization and Contemporary Situation. Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2002.

Stone, Ruth M. Music in West Africa: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

MUSIC: Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble. *Dimedi Faabe*. Unity Community Center, 2001.

WEB: www.pbs.org/wnet/africa
www.africanmusic.org
www.pbskids.org/africa
www.unitycommunity.com
www.lesballetsafricains.com



The African Drum...

has been used to bring people together, communicate, celebrate and is used for spiritual healing in Africa and many other parts of the world.

The African craftsmen would cut and hollow the drum from the trunk of trees, cut it to a perfect shape to produce extremely wonderful sounds, and cover it with the skin of an animal. They used powerful string, cord or animal skin to tune the drum for different levels of sounds. Certain animal skins would be used for different drums to produce sounds from low to high ranges.

The family of drums that the UAD specializes in using originated in West Africa, and is called the Djembe family of drums.

The Djembe drums said referred to be the healing drums and can be tuned to many levels of sounds. Djembe is normally the lead drum and is covered with goat skin.

The Sanbeni is the middle sized drum and is covered with cow skin.

The Doundoumba is the largest with powerful bass sounds and is covered with cow skin. The Kenkeni with the bell is also considered a lead drum, and the player can produce two different rhythms and sounds. The Kenkeni is also covered with cow skin.



DJEMBE



SANBENI



DOUNDOUMBA



KENKENI

REFLECTING AFTER THE SHOW

It is often after the show that the real learning begins. You and your class have had a shared experience – and it's in reflecting on the experience together that you will learn the different kinds of responses the show elicited. Sharing these responses gives students opportunities to learn about things that they might not have seen or heard. It helps them broaden their perceptions and hone their evaluative skills, cementing that they themselves think. The process addresses their aesthetic judgment and point of view.



Newspaper Report Activity

Imagine that you are a newspaper reporter who has been chosen to report on the performance by the *Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble*. Create a factual report of what you saw. Here are some tips to help you write an effective news story:

- Remember to answer the famous questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how.
- Put the main ideas in the first paragraph.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did this performance remind you of any other performances you have seen before? If so, explain.
2. Did you have a favorite part? A favorite performer?
3. If someone asked you about the performance you saw, what would you tell them about and why would you pick that particular part?
4. How is seeing and hearing music performed live different from seeing and/or hearing music on TV and radio?
5. What are some feelings you had after the performance?
6. What emotions did you see portrayed in the performance?



PARENT HAND-OUT

Dear Parents,

Today our class was treated to a performance by the Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble. Use the questions below to jump-start an interview with your student about the performance – not only will you get to learn what your student experienced, but it will also help him/her to process and reflect upon the onstage material.



1. What type of art form did you see? (Dance, Music, etc.)

2. What was the performance about? (Was there a plot? What was the subject matter?)

3. How did the sounds and sights of the performance make you feel? (Excited? Energized? Confused? Drained?)

4. What did you learn from the performance?

5. Was there a performer that you particularly liked or disliked? Why?

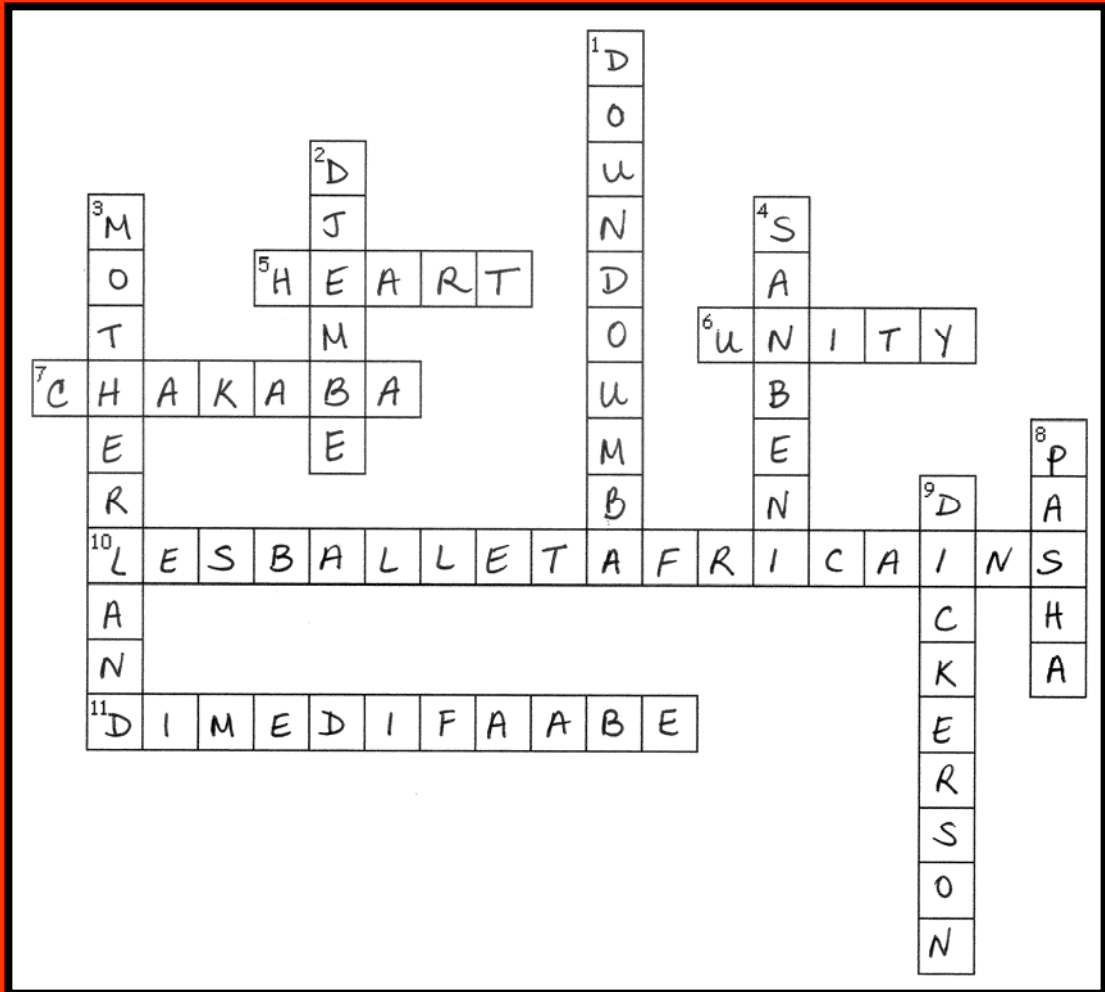
6. What 4 adjectives would you use to describe the performance or performer?

7. Did you have a favorite moment? Tell me about it.



ANSWER KEY

CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTION

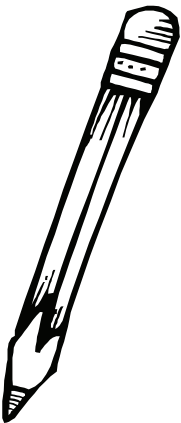


Dear Family,

Today, I saw a live, professional theatre performance presented by Arts On Stage called, Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble. The performance was a blend of music, dance and historical narrative that traces the roots of the culture of Salvador Brazil back to its African origins. There were beautiful costumes, live percussion and we got to do some dances too! Attending a live performance is very different from watching a television show or a movie. Please ask me about my favorite dances and moments. I would like to tell you all the things I learned and remember best.

Love,

Child's Name



We welcome you and/or your child's comments. Artwork is always appreciated too! Contact information below.



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