

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. The program being presented at your school consists of African Dance, Drum, and Masquerade. The ensemble has been greatly blessed with the famous "Pasha" the Stilt walker / Dancer, who has been a member since 1984. UAD is based in Camden, New Jersey and is comprised of members from 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."

Since its inception, the ensemble has grown to be one of the largest professional African Dance & Drum Ensembles in the United States. 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. 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. Members of UAD have also extensively studied 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 are another group from West Africa (Guinea) that have served as mentors and role models for the UAD.

The Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble are 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 Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble has been a part of The Mann Center's Young People's Concert Series since its inception in 1998. The group has also performed in The Mann Center's Connecting Arts-N-Schools program for the past five years!


AFRICAN DANCE

African dance embodies athleticism and a graceful beauty flowing with rhythm. In Africa, dance is a means of marking the experiences of life, encouraging abundant crops, and healing the sick soul and body and is also done purely for enjoyment. All ceremonial African dances have a purpose - they tell stories and relate history. African music and dance in its essence communicates concepts of life on an elevated level; dance to the African is a universal, transcendent language. Traditionally, people throughout the continent of Africa achieve direct communication between themselves and their gods through ritual music and dance, including many with masks. In Africa, dancers do not perform on a stage, but interact directly with the rest of the people, who also participate in the ritual, not by sitting in seats in an audience, but by singing, playing and having dialogue with the musicians and dancers. When these dances *are* done on the stage, they often include both traditional and innovative elements, illustrating how dance is not static, but changing and growing even as the performers meet new people and styles on their travels!

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: 23,382,848
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



FUN FACT:

Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic groups that speak over 4000 dialects!

NIGERIA AT A GLANCE

AREA: 923,768 sq km
POPULATION: 149,229,090
CAPITAL: Abuja
LANGUAGE: English (official), Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo (Ibo), Fulani
PRESIDENT: Umaru Musa YAR'ADUA
HIGHEST ELEVATION: Chappal Waddi 2,419 m
MONETARY UNIT: naira

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.

WORD SEARCH

Q K D F Q I C E D E Y P Y K R M C G A Q
 F F B N N W L K L W R P T I E O H C C N
 Z O N I A B P T Z O Z Q I X Z N A S C U
 X U B N M L L M F D C R N O R E K U R J
 G A U E D R R E U A U O U M Y D A E A A
 F U S A R F S E S R Y U M A S W B Y N R
 K N N K Z S V S H B D F M Z Q U A Q H I
 E C A I I A A E I T D U O A E N I U G G
 E Z Q O T V M V Q W O K C D R E N I Z T
 I L N C A Y G O Q C Q M N R H J V T T L
 M A I J L T S C C S F A F A D J A T O R
 L O J F Z U I R Q U S O G T V L D R M L
 E C N A M R O F R E P I P U L S E S B D
 M B T P R N G R F B H S U L Y J C W W P
 V P M Z G A Y T V S T L K E T Y Q C T N
 B J O E P U W C W L O G D I W V J N V Z
 X A G F J Z P K M K D O R R U A W J F N
 G K P A Z D Z Z V A X I N S Z B A R G G
 P N E R J S X F R H P T A F W V R S E Q
 H D L J T I D E C S B C M G E Z M Z K L

ACCRA AFADJATO CASSAVA CEDI
 CHAKABA COMMUNITY DANCE DJEMBE
 DRUM ENSEMBLE GUINEA KENKENI
 KUFUOR MOTHERLAND PERFORMANCE
 PROFESSIONAL PULSE SPIRIT UNITY



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, Inouwali (Thank you)*
Yaya Diallo - *Nangape, Dououkan*
Mory Kante - *Courougnégné*

WEB: www.pbs.org/wnet/africa
www.africanmusic.org
www.unitycommunity.com
www.lesballetsafricains.com
www.african-drumbeat.co.uk/index.html



The African Drum

has been used to bring people together, communicate, and 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. 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

1. Discuss the costumes and instruments and their role in the performance.
2. What did you learn about rhythms and how they are created?
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 a live performance different from seeing and/or hearing a performance on TV and radio?
5. What are some feelings you had after the performance?
6. What emotions did you see portrayed in the performance?



ANSWER KEY

WORD SEARCH SOLUTION

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+	+	+	N	+	+	L	+	+	+	R	+	T	+	E	+	H	+	C	+
+	+	+	+	A	B	+	+	+	O	+	+	I	+	+	N	A	+	C	+
+	+	+	+	M	L	+	M	F	+	C	R	N	+	+	+	K	+	R	+
+	+	+	E	D	+	R	E	U	A	+	O	U	+	+	+	A	E	A	+
+	U	S	A	+	+	S	E	S	R	+	U	M	+	+	+	B	+	N	+
+	N	N	+	+	S	+	S	H	+	D	F	M	+	+	+	A	+	+	I
E	C	+	I	I	+	A	+	+	T	+	U	O	A	E	N	I	U	G	+
E	+	+	O	T	V	+	+	+	+	O	K	C	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	N	+	A	Y	+	+	+	+	+	M	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	A	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	A	F	A	D	J	A	T	O	+
L	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
E	C	N	A	M	R	O	F	R	E	P	+	P	U	L	S	E	+	+	+
+	B	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	M	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	T	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	E	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	I	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	J	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	R	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	D	+	+	+	+	+	+	I	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	P	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	I	D	E	C	S	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

