

“Drums and Dances of Africa” at The Sheldon Concert Hall Handbook for Teachers

WELCOME

We look forward to welcoming you and your students for the presentation of “Drums and Dances of Africa” at The Sheldon Concert Hall. We hope that the perfect acoustics and intimacy of the hall will make this an important and memorable experience.

ARRIVAL AND PARKING

We urge you to arrive at The Sheldon Concert Hall 15 to 30 minutes prior to the program. This will allow you to be seated in time for the performance and will allow a little extra time in case you encounter traffic on the way. Seating will be on a first come-first serve basis as schools arrive. To accommodate school schedules, we will start on time.

The Sheldon is located at 3648 Washington Boulevard, just around the corner from the Fox Theatre. Parking is free for school buses and cars and will be available on Washington near The Sheldon. Please enter by the steps leading up to the concert hall front door. If you have a disabled student, please call The Sheldon (314-533-9900) to make arrangement to use our street level entrance and elevator to the concert hall.

CONCERT MANNERS

Please coach your students on good concert manners before coming to The Sheldon Concert Hall. Good audiences love to listen to music and they love to show their appreciation with applause, usually at the end of an entire piece and occasionally after a good solo by one of the musicians. Urge your students to take in and enjoy the great music being performed.

Food and drink are prohibited in The Sheldon Concert Hall.

Any device (cell-phone, alarm watch or toy) that makes noise is a distraction for both the musicians on stage and your fellow audience members and should be put away prior to the performance. No photos or video are allowed during the performance.

Restrooms are located on the same level as the concert hall close to the Art Galleries. Please encourage students to use restrooms at school or to use Sheldon restrooms before the concert begins. If a student does need to use the restroom during the performance, the best time to get up is between musical numbers.

ART GALLERIES

The Sheldon features seven art galleries in the Emerson Galleries building that adjoins the Concert Hall, including the Bellwether Gallery of St. Louis Artists, Gallery of Music, Gallery of Photography, Bernoudy Gallery of Architecture, the AT&T Gallery of Children’s Art and on the lower level, The Nancy Spiritas Kranzberg Gallery and Ann Lee and Wilfred Konneker Gallery. You are invited to call The Sheldon and add a 20 or 30-minute visit to the galleries when you bring your students to “Drums and Dances of Africa.”

Drums and Dances of Africa



A BREIF HISTORY OF AFRICA

Africa is the second largest continent and the oldest inhabited territory on earth. In fact, if you were to combine The United States of America, India, China, Europe and Japan, they would all fit into the vast continent of Africa. At 11.73 million square miles, Africa is the home of 1.1 billion people. Anthropologists have found evidence of human life in the region dating as far back as 7 million years ago. Since then the country has seen the rise of massive ancient civilizations in places like Egypt and Mali, survived horrific historical events such as the slave trade and colonialization and experienced liberation. Through all of this, Africa has maintained a rich sense of African culture and heritage, which dates back centuries. Comprised of 55 countries, the most recent being The Republic of South Sudan (2011), it is crucial to remember that Africa is comprised of a wide variety of different ethnicities, religions and languages (an estimated 2,000). With this being said, Africa is a continent with countless unique and vibrant cultures. These cultures manifest themselves in things like cuisine, folklore, clothing, music and dance, to name a few. Drums and Dances of Africa is based on Western African culture. The region of Western Africa includes Benin, Burkina Faso, the island of Cape Verde, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Cote D'Ivoire (or the Ivory Coast), Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. More specifically, the performance focuses on the cultures of Cote D'Ivoire and Mali.

Cote D'Ivoire/ the Ivory Coast

Archeologists have found evidence of human existence in the West African country of Cote D'Ivoire as early as 15,000-10,000 B.C.E. (the Upper-Paleolithic period). Before the

Europeans arrived, the country consisted of five major kingdoms. In 1893 the French had successfully colonized the entire country. By 1960, Cote D'Ivoire had won their independence back. While French is still the official language, there are as many as 65 dialects spoken and a deep sense of their own culture that manifests in things like African drums and dances, amongst other things. Each ethnic group (there are around 60!) has its own unique way of using music, usually consisting most heavily of percussion instruments, and dance to express themselves. One of the most popular festivals in Cote D'Ivoire today is known as the Fetes des Masques (Festival of Masks) which occurs every November in the region of Man. It is a festival of remembrance, celebration, music and dance. The masks are worn for various reasons including to protect themselves against vengeance and to help pass knowledge onto future generations. The overarching purpose of the Fetes des Masques is to commemorate the dead and pay homage to the forest spirits (often embodied in masks) and, of course, to choose the best dancer.

Mali

Beginning around the year 300 C.E., the territory of modern day Mali existed under 3 great ancient African empires: the Ghana Empire, the Mali Empire and the Songhai Empire. These empires were very loose in their geographic and political boundaries as well as their ethnic identities, meaning that many diverse populations coexisted with each other within a flexible area of land. By 1905, most of modern day Mali had been colonized by the French. This resulted in the formation of the state the Europeans referred to as French Sudan. French Sudan would later join Senegal to form the Mali Federation, which would gain independence in 1960. Much like Cote D'Ivoire, French remains the official language of Mali; however, there are over 40 different African dialects spoken amongst the various different ethnic groups. The culture within

the country reflects this demographic diversity. Malian musical traditions have been passed down for years by West African historians and story tellers known as Griots (“Keepers of Memories”). Mali is also similar to Cote D’Ivoire in that its music possesses heavy emphasis on percussion; however, perhaps the Kora is the most popular instrument in traditional Malian music. The Kora is a string instrument, consisting of a bridge and 21 strings and producing harp-like sounds. Today, traditional music and dance is still used in various ceremonies and celebrations.

VOCABULARY

Zaouli Mask Dance: Zaouli is a traditional dance of the Guro people in central Cote D’Ivoire. The dance was developed in the 1950s, and is performed by a male member of the community during funerals and celebrations. The dance is seen as a tool of unity within Guro communities and is believed to increase the productivity of a village. The mask itself is meant to embody feminine beauty, with its focal point being a woman’s face, surrounded by depictions of snakes and birds.

Kanaga Mask: The Kanaga mask is originally created by the Dogon people from the Sanga region in Mali. These masks are worn at rituals called dama. The goal of the dama is to transport deceased family members away from the village and increase the status of the deceased as well as their loved ones. These masks resemble the human body and are composed of a wooden structure in the form of a double-barred cross with short vertical elements projecting from the tips of each horizontal bar.

Temate Dance: The Temate dance, translating to “the most beautiful dance,” comes from the Wobe people of the western edge of Cote D’Ivoire. The Temate dance is a joyful story telling of rice, from the seeding to the harvest. Traditionally, this dance is performed by young women who mime the actions of cultivating the rice field; however, now the dance is performed by both male and female, young and old.

Diansa/Jansa Dance: Originating in Kayes and Kita of Mali, the Kansoke people developed the Diansa Dance, also known as the Jansa Dance, which is one of the most popular dances in the

region. Starting slowly and picking up speed, this dance takes place at night and is for all people and occasions. Today this dance is performed in 5 countries throughout Western Africa.

Djembe Drum: The Djembe drum is a rope-tuned goblet shaped drum made with wood and covered in rawhide, usually goat skin. The drum is played using bare hands.

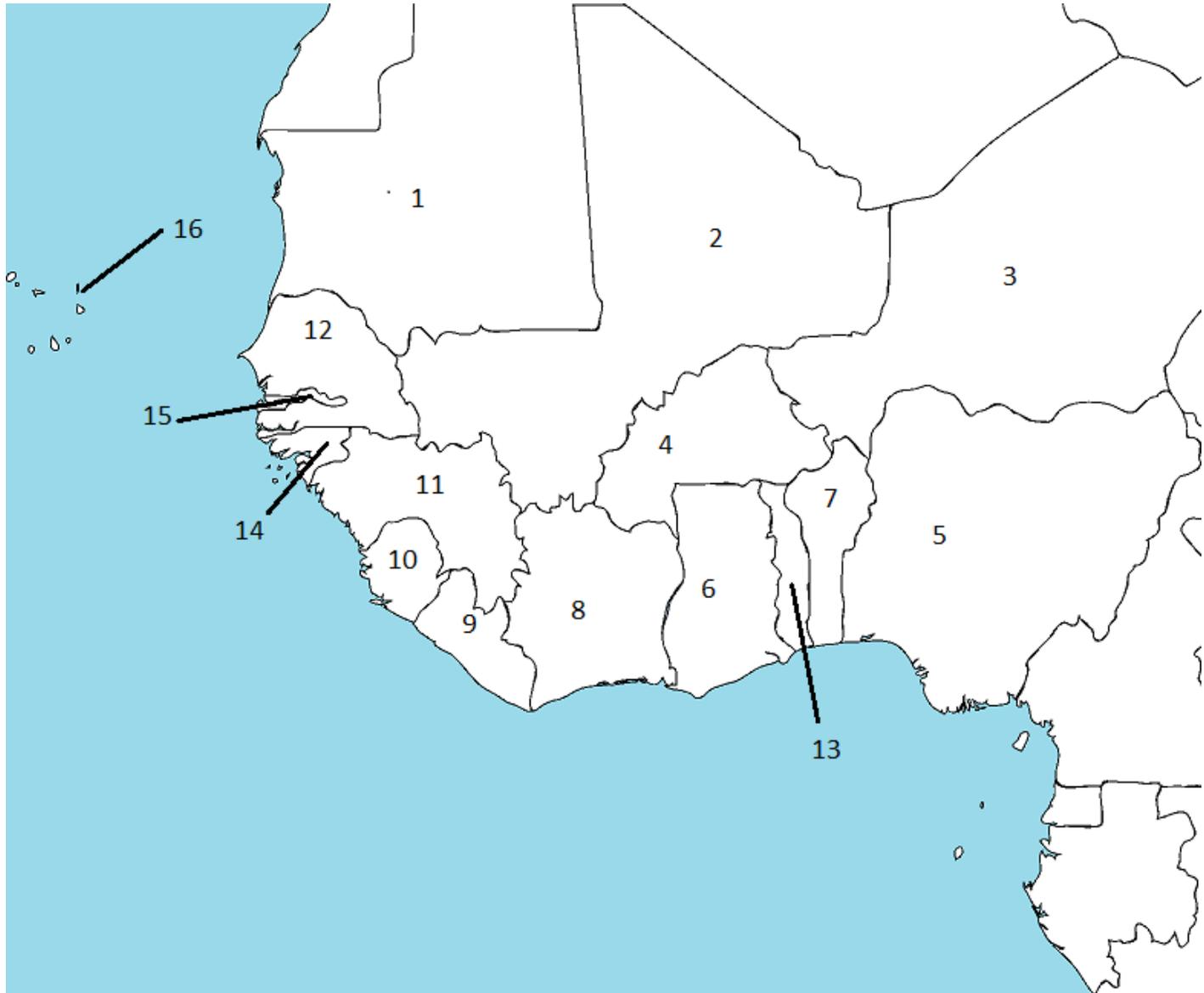
Dunun Drums: Dunun is the name for a family of drums which consist of, largest to smallest, Dununba, the Sangban and the Kenkeni drums. These drums are most popularly used by the Mande people of West Africa. The drums are rope tuned and cylindrical with rawhide (usually cow or goat) at both ends and played with a stick.

Krin: A krin, also known as a slit drum, is popular throughout Africa. This drum is hollow and is typically made out of bamboo or another type of wood. The most prominent characteristic of this drum are its long and narrow slits, varying in size, which determine the sounds the drum will be capable of making.

Kora: A Kora is a 21 stringed harp instrument with a long wooden neck and is built from a large gourd. Typically, 11 of the strings are played by the left hand and the other 11 are played by the right. In order to make a kora, the gourd must be cut in half and covered with cow skin. The final product produces a sound similar to that of a harp.

ACTIVITIES

Can you identify all 16 countries in Western Africa?



Word Bank: Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Benin, Togo, Cote D'Ivoire, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Ghana, Cape Verde

Can you match the photo to the appropriate vocabulary word?



Djembe Drums



Zaouli Mask



Krin



Kanaga Mask



Kora



Dunun Drums

Country Case Study

Have your students pick an out an African country to study. Allow ample time for research and inquiry. Have students fill out Case study worksheet. Once students have completed their worksheets, have them share what they have found with a partner.

County Name/ Nicknames:

Where is it located? What is the largest city?

How many ethnic groups live in your country? How many languages are spoken?

How many religions are practiced? Which ones?

Was your country colonized? By who? When was it liberated?

Summarize a current events article from or about your country:

Diadie Bathily and Afriky Lolo

Diadie Bathily (pronounced Jah-Jay) is an accomplished choreographer, costume designer and dancer. While Diadie was born in Cote D'Ivoire, his parents were native to Mali. This gave him the opportunity to immerse himself in two different African cultures at once. He is an expert in the traditional dances of Mali, Cote D'Ivoire, Senegal and Ghana. When he was 25, Diadie left Africa to teach in Europe. Eventually in 1998, he made the move to St. Louis, Missouri. Since then he has founded the African dance group Afriky Lolo (2003), translating to "African Star." Afriky Lolo's mission statement is simple: "To celebrate West African dance with everyone." The group consists of 75 dancers, ages 6-60, and 8 drummers. Afriky Lolo uses the combination of music and dance to share the rich culture of West Africa with the St. Louis community, as well as numerous other communities all around the globe.

Activity Key

Can you identify all 16 countries in Western Africa?

1. Mauritania
2. Mali
3. Niger
4. Burkina Faso
5. Nigeria
6. Ghana
7. Benin
8. Cote D'Ivoire (the Ivory Coast)
9. Liberia
10. Sierra Leone
11. Guinea
12. Senegal
13. Togo
14. Guinea Bissau
15. Gambia
16. Cape Verde

Can you match the photo to the appropriate vocabulary word?



Djembe Drums

Zaouli Mask

Krin

Kanaga Mask

Kora

Dunun Drums