

# DRUMS AND DANCES OF AFRICA

## Teacher Handbook 2025-2026

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# Know-Before-You-Go 2025-2026

**Buses and Parking** Book your bus to arrive at The Sheldon 20 minutes before showtime, and to leave The Sheldon 1 hour after show time. We recommend your bus approaches from Spring Avenue. Staff will be waiting to help your bus park in the appropriate place and give further instructions. Please stay on the bus until you have those instructions. Buses park for free on the street in front of The Sheldon and in the lot. Cars park for free in the West Lot, on the right side of The Sheldon if you are facing the steps. Cars park on the perimeter to allow buses space on the interior of the lot.

**Tickets & Payment** Physical tickets will not be sent, but the seats reflected on your invoice will be reserved together, and you will be seated by ushers in the concert hall when you arrive. Your payment is due 30 days before the show. Payment online with a credit card is the preferred method, but your school can also send a check. Please contact the Director of Education if you have unusual circumstances. A Ticketing and Payment Policies Document is included with your invoice.

**Concert Manners** Please coach your students in good concert manners before coming to The Sheldon Concert Hall. Good audiences love to listen to music and show their appreciation with applause, usually at the end of an entire piece and occasionally after a good solo by one of the musicians. Food and drink are prohibited in The Sheldon Concert Hall. Any device that makes noise is a distraction for both the performers on stage and your fellow audience members and should be put away. No photos or video are allowed during the performance. Restrooms are on the same level as the concert hall near 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 Galleries will have on view the exhibition *We Each Hold Stories* from November 7, 2025 – May 2, 2026. *We Each Hold Stories* features 16 established and emerging Indigenous American artists co-curated by Tom Jones of the Ho-Chunk Nation and Paula Lincoln, The Sheldon Gallery Director. The work in the exhibition explores themes of personal experience, family, history, and current social issues. The artists reimagine their Native identity through storytelling, addressing land, community, and human behavior with a focus on healing and connection between past and present.

You are invited to contact The Sheldon and add a 30-minute visit to the galleries after the concert when you attend a Sheldon Education Program. Tours are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and we can accommodate 40 students at one time, 3rd grade and older. Groups with 80 students can be divided into two consecutive tours, totaling 60 minutes. Groups of more than 80 students exceed our capacity.

**Health + Safety** Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information on health and safety measures. To communicate the need for accessible seating, please indicate so on your reservation form. The Sheldon staff can direct you toward elevators. We recommend students that might have sensory or stimulation issues bring their own noise-cancelling headphones, but if you are surprised by a need for them, we have some in the box office.

# Show Description and Curricular Connections

## About the Show

Drums and Dances of Africa is an immersive experience in West African culture. Afriky Lolo brings djembes and dunun drums that resonate in the concert hall as Diádié Bathily and members of his dance troupe perform. They teach the significance of the masks, dances, and music, and invite students to engage with the music and dance.

## Recommended Resources

Afriky Lolo (Website)  
<https://www.afrikylolo.org/>

Kennedy Center Education  
Five(ish) Minute Drum Lesson- African Drumming: The Djembe  
<https://youtu.be/q5U8md4rZS8>

Five(ish) Minute Dance Lesson- African Dance: Dinhe (Zimbabwe)  
<https://youtu.be/y3W-YloW8Bw>

World Music LLC (St. Louis-based World Instrument Collection)  
showcases, in an online gallery, instruments from Africa.  
<https://wmic.net/africa/>

Zaouli Masked Dance Demonstration  
<https://youtu.be/5fSQAQ-GOzw?si=BWioivNEfxpeUi3F>

## The Arts as Culture, History, and Connectors from National Core Arts Standards on Artistic Literacy

### Philosophical Foundations

Throughout history the arts have provided essential means for individuals to express their ideas, experiences, feelings and deepest beliefs. Each discipline shares common goals, but approaches them through distinct media and techniques. Understanding artwork provides insights into individuals' own and others' cultures and societies, while also providing opportunities to access and express, and integrate meaning across a variety of content areas.

### Lifelong Goals

Artistically literate citizens know and understand artwork from varied historical periods and cultures, and actively seek and appreciate diverse forms and genres of artwork of enduring quality and significance. They also seek to understand relationships between the arts and cultivate habits of searching for and identifying patterns, relationships between the arts, and other knowledge.

### The Sheldon's Goal

We provide access to age-appropriate concert experiences that engage and inspire the student audience to pursue artistic literacy and all the benefits it offers.



**Diádié Bathily, Artistic Director of Afriky Lolo**

Diádié Bathily (pronounced Jah-Jay) is a Master dancer from the Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa. He immigrated to the United States in 1998. He has a strong personal and professional desire to share the beauty, culture, and passion of West African dance with Americans, especially African Americans.

Diádié Bathily has danced professionally for over 30 years and has performed professionally for Marie-Rose Guiraud's Les Guirivoires, Adama Drame, Wara Danse (his company in the Cote d'Ivoire), and Diádié Bathily Dance (in the United States). Bathily is an experienced teacher who specializes in traditional dances from Mali, the Cote d'Ivoire, Senegal, and Ghana. He teaches and performs in St. Louis elementary and secondary schools and at local universities, colleges, and dance studios throughout the Midwest. Throughout the school year, Bathily teaches and gives workshops at local elementary and secondary public schools, at Washington University and at the University of Missouri in St. Louis. Bathily also choreographs original pieces for university dance companies.

# Performers



**Afriky Lolo**

Afriky Lolo, founded and led by Diádié Bathily, is a West African dance non-profit corporation that is committed to bringing West African dance and culture to the St. Louis, Missouri, community through teaching and performing.

Diádié Bathily formed Afriky Lolo in 2003, which became a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation in 2007. The Company has 75 dancers — ranging in age from 6 to over 60 and 8 drummers. Afriky Lolo, meaning African Star, performs traditional West African dance at community events throughout the year. The Company's annual performance is its largest event.

Afriky Lolo performances are choreographed, staged, costumed, and directed by Diádié Bathily. These performances reflect the rich culture of West Africa, and each dance performed by Afriky Lolo is enhanced by traditional West African costumes. Costuming is a very important aspect of traditional West African dance. Bathily travels frequently to the Cote d'Ivoire and Mali in order to obtain authentic West African cloth, beads, and masks for the costumes worn by the dancers and drummers. All costumes are sewn by Bathily and/or specialists in West Africa.

Afriky Lolo continues to grow its public recognition, its teaching opportunities and its performance opportunities. Bathily has seen African American children inspired by their heritage, excited by the opportunity to participate in this dancing, and even reporting more interest and energy in school as a result.



# Drums and Dances of Africa Vocabulary

**Zaouli mask dance-** Zaouli is a traditional dance of the Guro people in central Cote D'Ivoire. The dance was developed in the 1950's 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.

**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 people of West Africa. The drums are rope tubes and cylindrical with rawhide (usually cow or goat) at both ends and played with a stick.

**Zaouli mask-** The mask worn for the Zaouli dance. It is meant to embody feminine beauty, with its focal point being a woman's face, surrounded by depictions of snakes and birds.



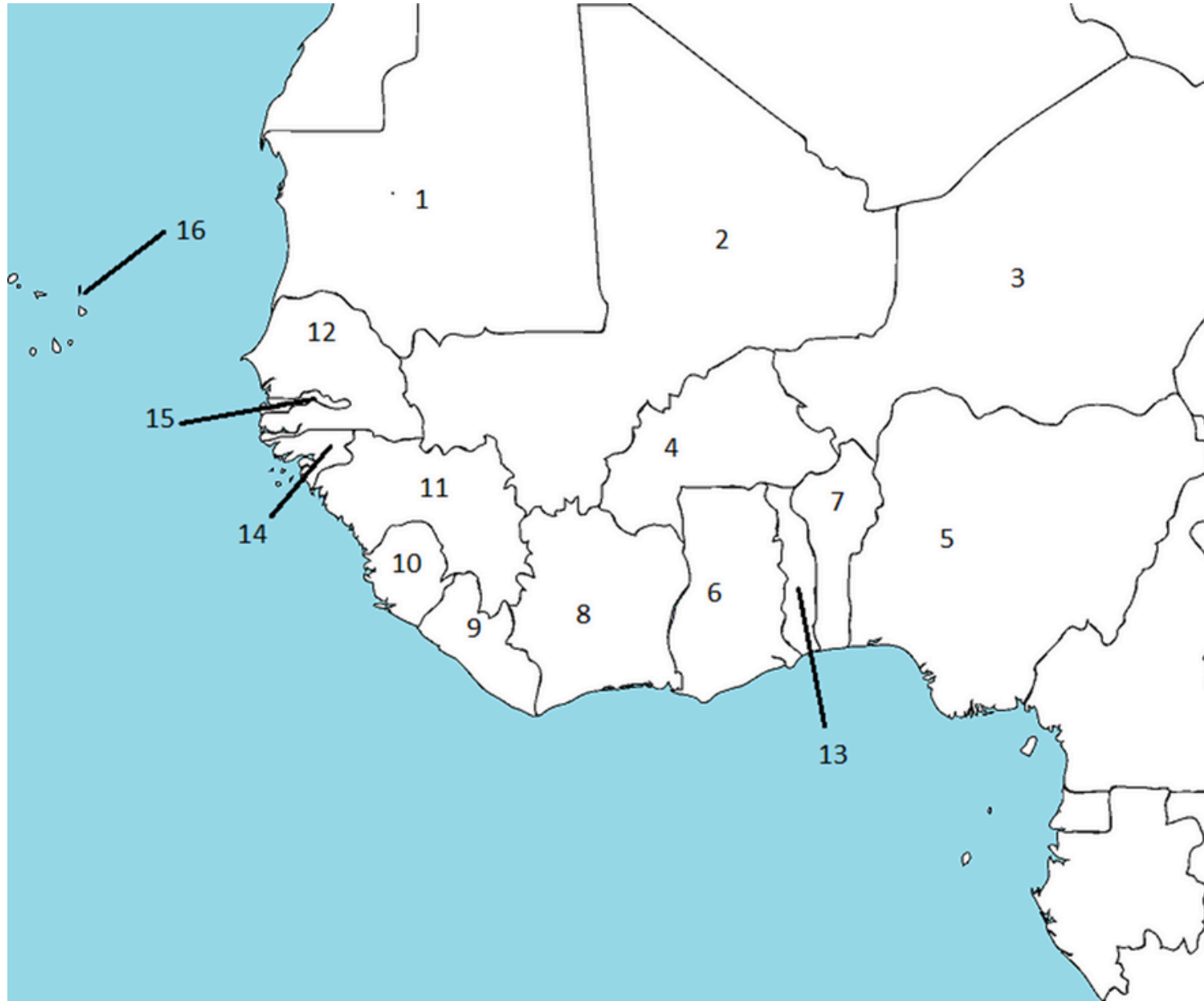
# Africa & The Ivory Coast

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. The continent has seen the rise of massive ancient civilizations, 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). 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, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. The performance focuses on the culture of Cote D'Ivoire, also known as the Ivory Coast.

Cote D'Ivoire gets its nickname, "the Ivory Coast" from the region's successful trade in elephant tusks. Although humans have inhabited Cote D'Ivoire as early as 15,000-10,000 B.C.E., the French colonized the country in 1893. 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 expressions 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.



# Activity: Identify the Countries of West Africa



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

# Activity Key





# Activity: Learn the Diansa Dance



0:00 Step-by-step instructions  
3:00 Full dance with drumming

We recommend using this [Vimeo link](#) *after* you have seen the show, so your whole classroom can dance with Diadie!

# Postcards Without Borders

Allow students to reflect on the performance by writing a postcard to a friend describing what they experienced at The Sheldon. Students can color the front and write a message on the back.  
(Please hand deliver- the “stamp” is fake.)



## Missouri ELA Standard

Example: 2nd Grade

Writing 2A. Write opinion texts that:

- a. introduce a topic or text being studied, using complete sentences
- b. state an opinion about the topic or text and provide reasons for the opinion
- c. use specific words that are related to the topic and audience
- d. use linking/transition words and phrases to signal event order
- e. provide evidence of a beginning, middle, and concluding statement or section

Writing 2B. Write informative/explanatory texts that:

- a. introduce a topic or text being studied, using complete sentences
- b. use facts and definitions to develop points in generating paragraphs
- c. use specific words that are related to the topic and audience
- d. use linking words and phrases to signal event order
- e. create a concluding statement or paragraph

**Please share excellent student work with us!**

Email photos to  
[educationboxoffice@thesheldon.org](mailto:educationboxoffice@thesheldon.org)

## Missouri Music Standard

Example: 2nd Grade

Responding.

8. Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.

- a. Demonstrate knowledge of musical concepts and how the support creators'/performers' expressive intent.

9. Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work. A. Apply personal and expressive preferences in the evaluation of music for specific purposes.

Connecting.

10. Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.

- A. Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

## Suggested Drums and Dances of Africa Prompts

What did you learn about the dunun family of drums?

What sounds can be made on a djembe?

How is dance part of life in Africa?

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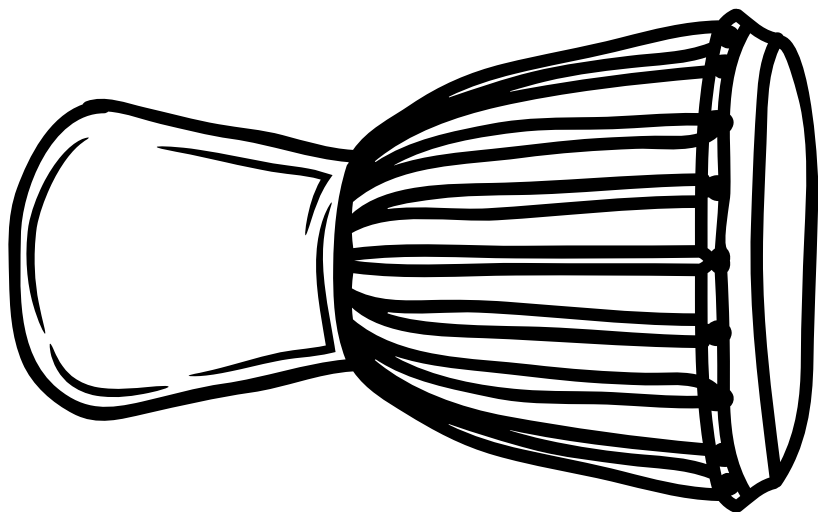
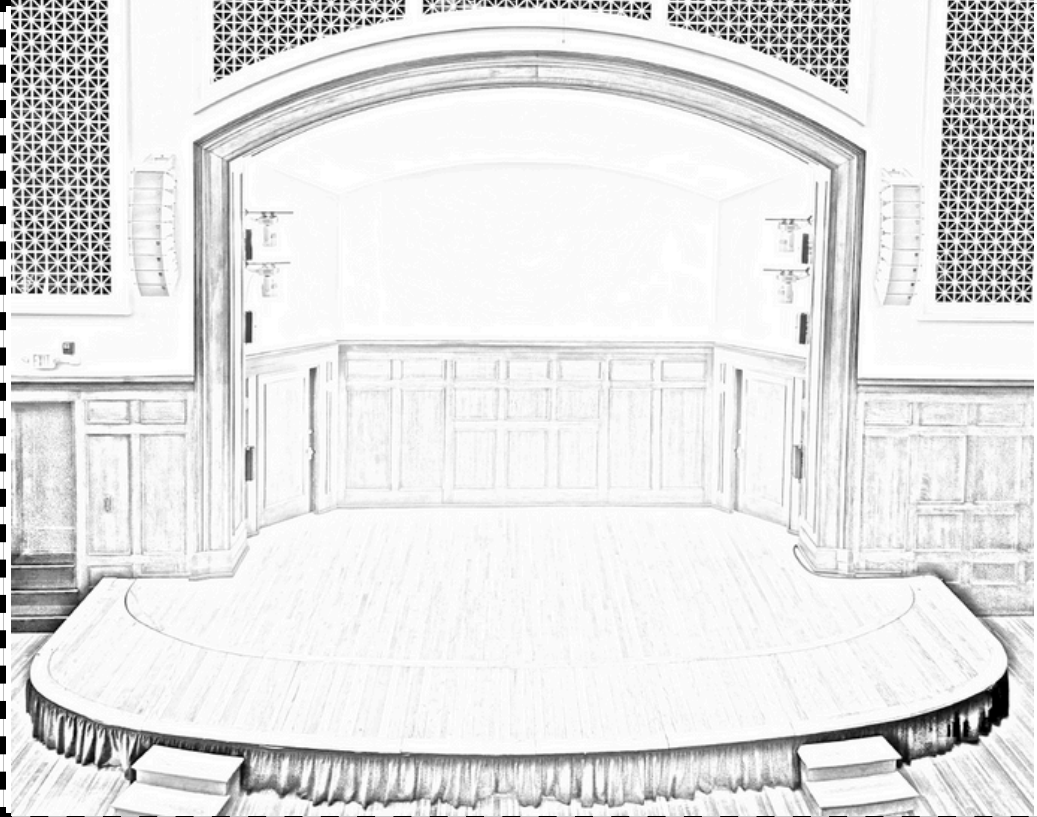


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DJEMBE

kélé filla  
saba nani

AFRICA





# About the Sheldon



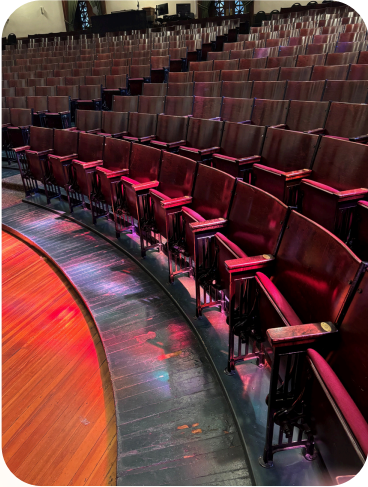
The Sheldon Concert Hall is a historical building that was constructed in 1912 by the famous architect, Louis Spiering. It was originally home to the Ethical Society of St. Louis and is named after Walter Sheldon, founding member of the Ethical Society. It was purchased in 1991, becoming the Sheldon Art Foundation, with the first season presented in 1994. The education programs began in 1999 and continue to inspire young audiences today.



In 1998 The Sheldon Art Galleries were opened in the building next door to the concert hall, joined by a glass bridge. Interestingly, the building used to be a parking garage before it was renovated for the Sheldon galleries and event spaces.



# Concert Hall Eye-Spy



## Acoustic Materials

The Sheldon is known for having perfect acoustics, which means that sound travels really well – even without amplification! The architect of The Sheldon carefully considered **shape**, **size**, and **materials** used in order to make the perfect concert hall. Hard and smooth surfaces **reflect** sound back to the listener and soft surfaces **absorb** sound.

The wood floor beneath your feet acts like the belly of a REALLY large guitar, vibrating with the sounds from stage. What you *cannot* see is that under the floor is open space and a dirt floor. The open space allows the floor to freely vibrate and the dirt floor absorbs the extra vibrations that pass through.



## Reappearing patterns

Louis Spiering, architect of The Sheldon, gave the room his own personal touch through this geometric pattern found on the concert hall doors. This pattern is also found elsewhere in the concert hall. See if you can find the pattern when you visit!



## Stage extension

If you look closely you will notice a seam where an extension to the original stage was added. The first row of original seats was removed to make room for this stage.

## Stained glass windows

When you walk in the concert hall you won't be able to miss the beautiful stain glass windows creating a kaleidoscope of colors! Do you notice the contrasting designs? The windows on opposite sides of the stage were created by different artists at different times.

