

# Drums and Dances of Africa

Performed by Afriky Lolo



# Know Before You Go 2023-2024

## **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. Staff will be waiting to help your bus park in the appropriate place. 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. The group should stay on the bus and send one person in to check in the group and get further instructions.

## **Tickets & Payment**

No tickets will be sent out, 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 special circumstances. Ticketing and Payment Policies Document is included with your invoice.

## **Teacher Handbook**

The provided teacher handbook includes recommended activities and resources related to the content of the show. It can be accessed on the web on the page for the specific show.

## **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. 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 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 Youth and Emerging Artist Gallery 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 attend a Sheldon Education Program. This season the fall exhibition is open September 8- January 20. The spring exhibition is open March 8-May 4. In between, the gallery is closed for installation and is not available for tours. Tours are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

## **Health + Safety**

Please visit our website the most up-to-date information on health and safety measures. To communicate needs for accessible seating, please indicate 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.

# The Performers

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.

Learn more about Afriky Lolo on their website:

[Afriky Lolo | West African Dance Company](#)

## A BRIEF 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). 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 and 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 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 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 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. 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.

**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.

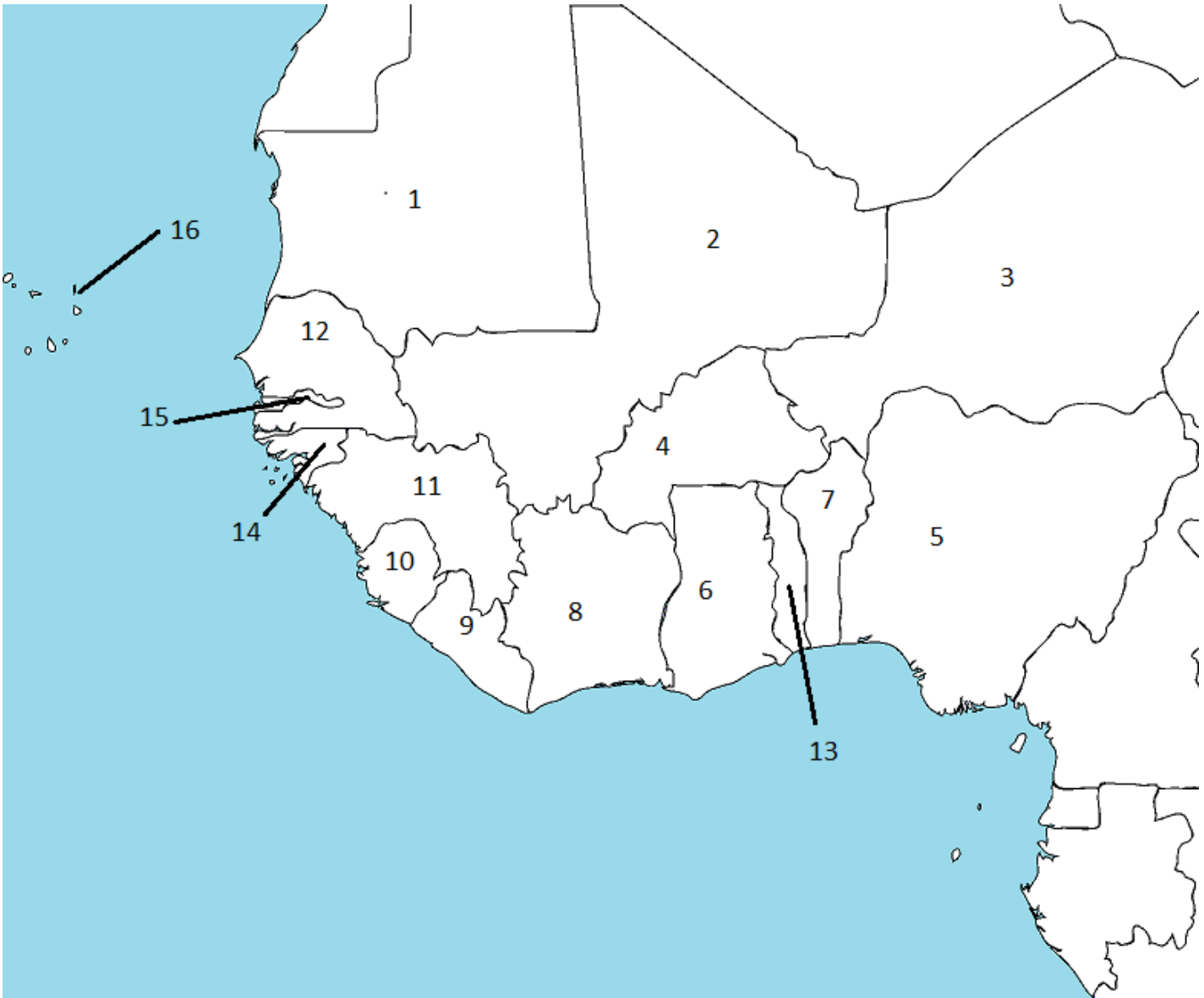
**Diansa/Jansa Dance:** Originating in Kayes and Kita of Mali, the Kansoke people developed the Diansa Dance, also known as the Jansa Dance, which is one of the most popular dances in the region. Starting slowly and picking up speed, this dance takes place at night and is for all people and occasions. 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.

# 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



Dunun Drums

# Country Case Study

Pick an African country to study. Complete this case-study worksheet using resources like books or websites. Once your research is complete, share what you have found with a partner.

Country Name/ Nicknames: \_\_\_\_\_

Where is it located? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the largest city? \_\_\_\_\_

How many ethnic groups live in this country? \_\_\_\_\_

How many languages are spoken? \_\_\_\_\_

How many religions are practiced? Which ones?

\_\_\_\_\_

Was this country colonized? By whom? When was it liberated?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Summarize a current events article from or about this country:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Activity Answer 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

Dunun Drums

