

Connecting Arts-N-Schools

STUDY GUIDE



2007
&
2008

Universal African Dance and Drum Ensemble



WELCOME to CONNECTING ARTS-N-SCHOOLS!

By participating in this program, you are joining more than 10,000 students and teachers from area schools in valuing the educational and inspirational power of live performances by professional artists. By using this study guide, you are taking an even greater step toward understanding the value of the arts, and implementing them as vital and inspiring educational tools. This guide will help you and your students to anticipate, investigate, and reflect upon your experience with the Mann. We are so glad to have you join us for another exciting season of Connecting Arts-N-Schools. Enjoy the journey, and enjoy the show!

- Education Staff

ABOUT THE MANN...

Originally founded as the summer home of the Philadelphia Orchestra, The Mann Center for the Performing Arts is the only outdoor cultural arts venue in the Philadelphia region and one of the largest of its kind in the nation.

As a nonprofit organization, we operate with the help of ticket sales, grant monies, corporate support, and donations from friends and patrons.

"Giving back" to the community is part of our mission. That's why we offer a host of outreach opportunities as a FREE service to underserved audiences through our Access the Arts Program. Access the Arts includes complimentary tickets for nonprofit groups, our Young People's Concert Series, and more.

Another educational program offered by The Mann is our Connecting Arts-N-Schools Initiative. This is the program that brings multicultural workshops and performances to your elementary, middle and high schools throughout Philadelphia. This initiative, as well as the other educational programs at the Mann Center, are designed to broaden the cultural horizons of young people.



~ NEW FIELD EDUCATION/OUTREACH CENTER ~

In order to further strengthen our commitment to educational programs that enrich the lives of young people in the Philadelphia region, we have recently dedicated our new Field Education/Outreach Center.

Situated on our Mann campus, the center accommodates up to 100 students for outreach performances, lectures, master classes, visits from artists, and more. The center provides dedicated facilities for the 35,000 school children the Mann Center receives each year.

***Because of the vital importance the audience plays in live performances, we strongly suggest that you discuss the guidelines below with your students before the performance.
Thank you!***

We want you to enjoy Universal African Dance and Drum's performance, so here are some tips to make your Connecting Arts-N-Schools experience successful and fun!

How will I know when the show is starting? You will see the lights in the auditorium get dim, and a member of the education staff will come out on stage to say hello and introduce the performance.

What do I do during the show? Everyone is expected to be a good audience member. This keeps the show fun for everyone. Good audience members...

- are good listeners
- keep their hands and feet to themselves
- laugh at parts that are funny
- stay in their seats
- **do not** talk or whisper during the performance
- **do not** eat gum, candy, food or drink

How do I show that I liked what I saw and heard? As a general rule, each performance ends with applause from the audience. Applause says, "Thank you! You're great!" However, it is common for the audience to applaud after an exciting or especially wonderful part of the performance. At the end of the show, the performers will take a bow, or curtain call. This is the chance for the performers to be acknowledged and rewarded with applause. If audience members really enjoy the show, they may stand up and clap in what is called a standing ovation.

How can I let the performers know what I thought? We want to know what you thought about your experience at a Connecting Arts-N-Schools performance. Please tell us all about it in a letter, drawing, review, or other creation. If you had a wonderful time, or if you didn't enjoy your experience, please let us know, and we will pass along your feedback to the artists and donors who make these productions possible. Send your opinions, letters, or artwork to:

**Education Department
The Mann Center for the Performing Arts
123 South Broad Street, #1930
Philadelphia, PA 19109**



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.

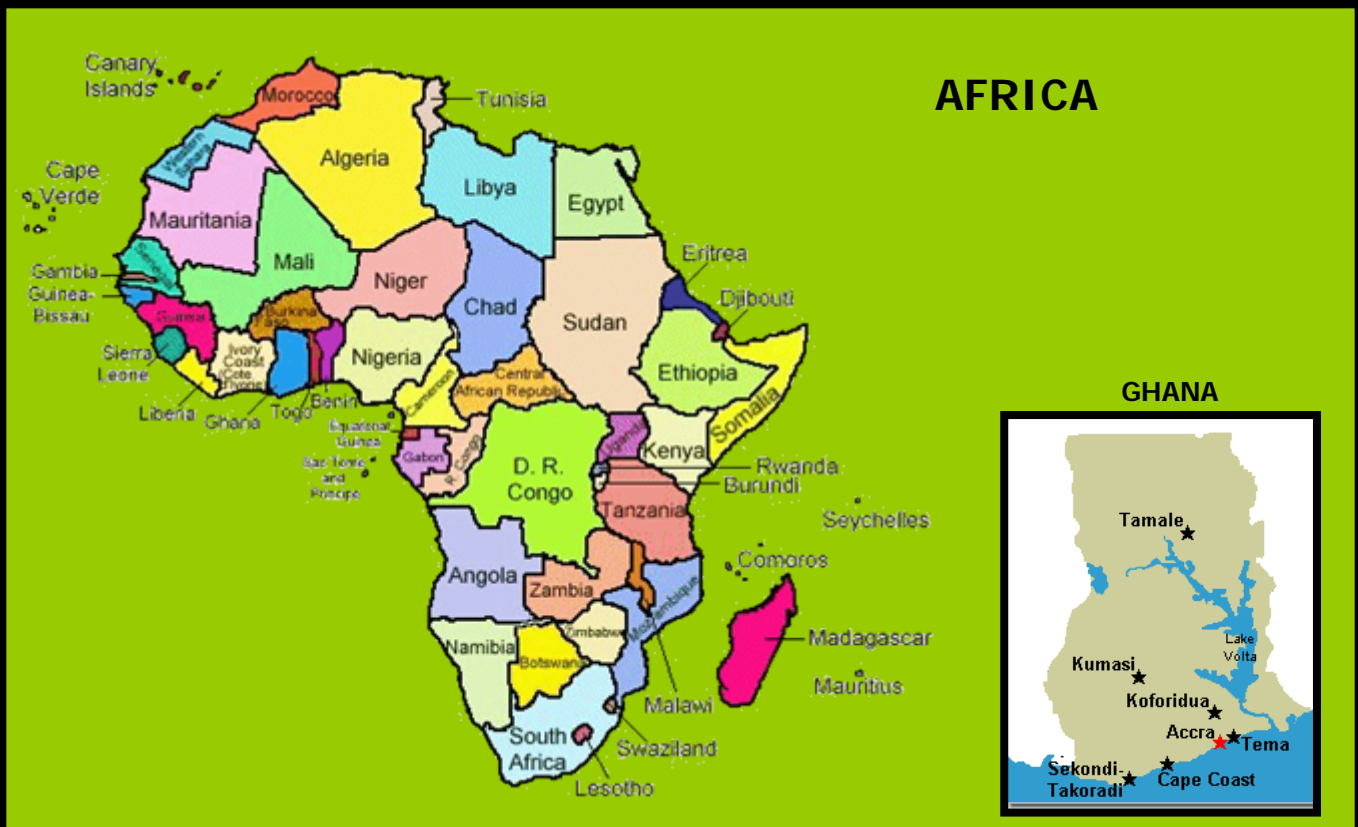
Les Ballet Africains is another group from West Africa (Guinea), that has served as mentors and role-models for the UAD. The UAD modeled themselves after Les Ballet Africains, and have personally received drums, instruments, costumes and teachings from members of Les Ballet Africains while they toured 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

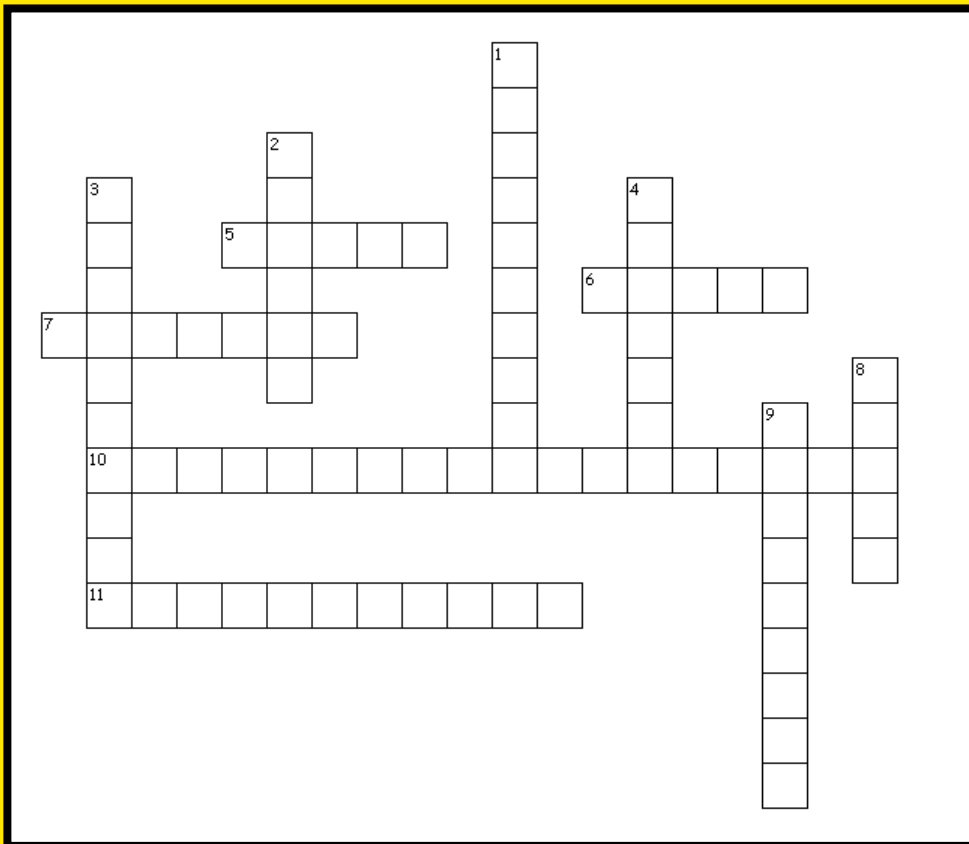
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



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?

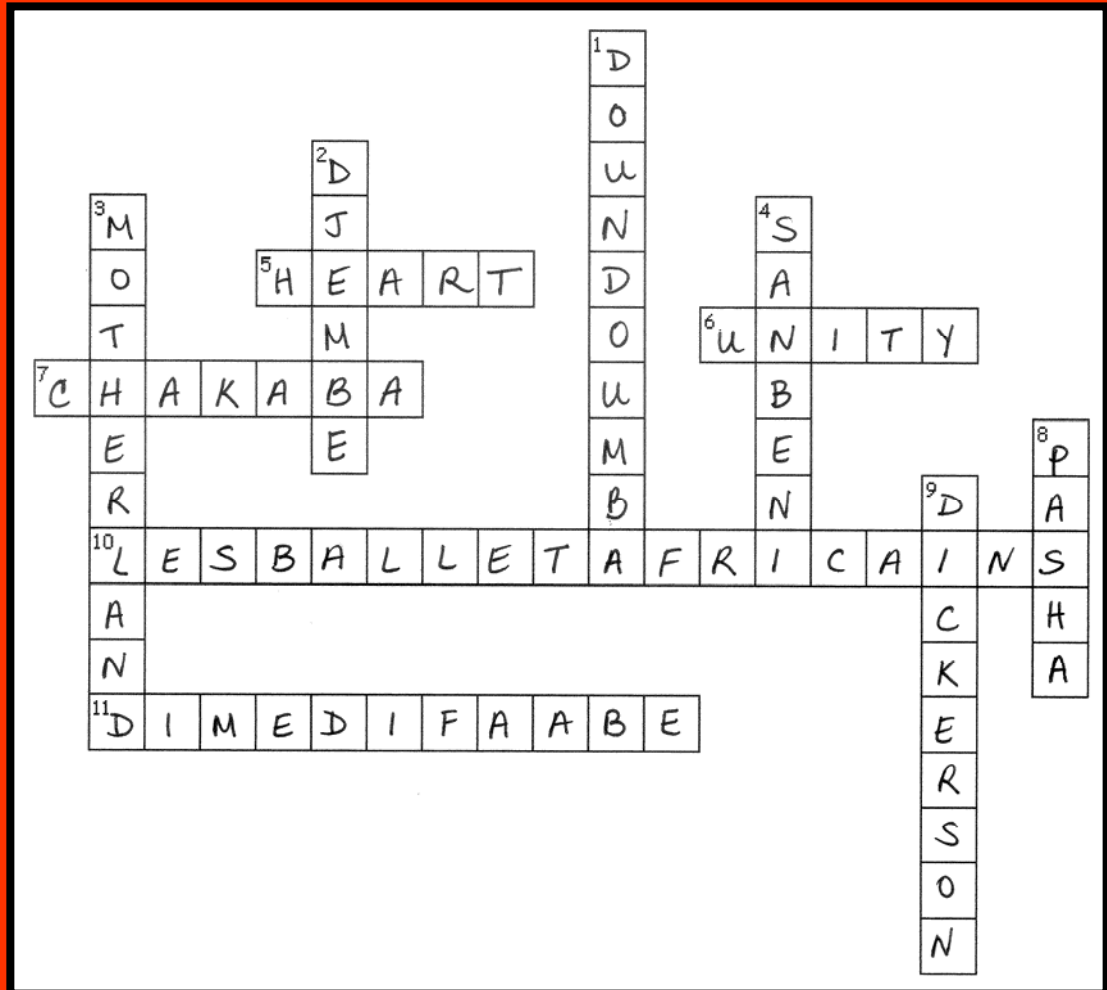
6. What 4 adjectives would you use to describe the performance or performer?

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



ANSWER KEY

CROSSWORD PUZZLE SOLUTION



THANK YOU

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