

ANDREW GRUESCHOW

Music Workshops

MEET THE ARTIST:

Percussionist **Andrew Grueschow** has studied and performed African music since 1992 in Africa and the United States. He holds a bachelors and masters degree in African Music and Dance and North Indian Music from the California Institute of the Arts. After receiving his masters degree, Andrew traveled throughout Ghana for six months studying and playing the music of both the Ewe and Dagomba tribes.

Andrew is a member of the renowned Zadonu African Music and Dance Company, led by Kobla Ladzekpo. He is also a member of the Hands On'Semble, a contemporary percussion quartet devoted to the art of hand drumming, led by famed percussionist/composer John Bergamo. Andrew, a featured member of the Cal Arts African Music and Dance Ensemble, has performed in Germany (2000 World Drum Festival), Brazil (Ritmos da Terra), Ghana and throughout the United States. Currently, Andrew teaches at Sangeet School of World Music and Dance and at Plaza de la Raza. He recently returned to Ghana to record traditional music for Zadonu records.



ABOUT THE WORKSHOPS:

Andrew's music workshops introduce students to the instruments, rhythms and culture of the Ewe people in Ghana, West Africa. Students have the opportunity to learn both simple and complex rhythm patterns that strengthen their musical perception and skill. They form a musical ensemble, incorporating traditional elements of Ghanaian culture, as well as basic musical concepts such as pulse, tempo, dynamics and rhythmic patterns. The ensemble plays traditional instruments, and has the opportunity to view video excerpts of drummers and dancers from Ghana. Students are taught authentic musical signals and some may assume the role of "lead drummer" for the ensemble. Cultural aspects of music are also covered, such as geographic origins, names of instruments and the role of music in Ghanaian society.

Sessions begin with unison playing of basic rhythmic patterns and follow with more complex patterns, such as call and response and polyrhythms. Basic dance and movement patterns will be taught in some of the sessions. Throughout the workshop series, students will reflect on what they have learned and make connections to other areas of the curriculum.

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP:

- Please have the students wear nametags for the workshop. It saves time if they are made beforehand!
- Review the importance of listening and observing. Ask the students what it means to be a good listener. What does it mean to be a good observer? Why is it important in daily life? Why is it important when the artist is here?
- Discuss what kind of group activities use signals to organize the group, i.e., sports.
- Discuss the different types of music the students have been exposed to, and the different places where they have heard music.
- Locate Africa on a world map. Then, locate Ghana and have each student research a different aspect of Ghanaian culture, i.e. food, music, clothing.
- Introduce students to the concept of pulse. Let them feel their own pulse. Play tapes and CD's and lead the students in finding and tapping the pulse.

AFTER THE WORKSHOP:

- Review the major points presented in the workshops. What were the most important ideas? What parts of the workshop did the students like best? What did they learn about West African music and dance? What did they learn about themselves?
- Ask students to write about their experience of drumming.
- Challenge students to create their own signals to start and stop singing simple songs or clapping simple rhythms.
- Ask student to select a specific drum from West Africa to draw. Have them explain the technique used to play this drum and describe the sound it would make.
- Direct students to build a shaker using an empty pill container or coffee can and filling it partway with un-popped popcorn. Replace the lid, or make a cardboard lid, then cover the container with white paper and decorate with design patterns. Play drum music and use the shakers to accompany the music.